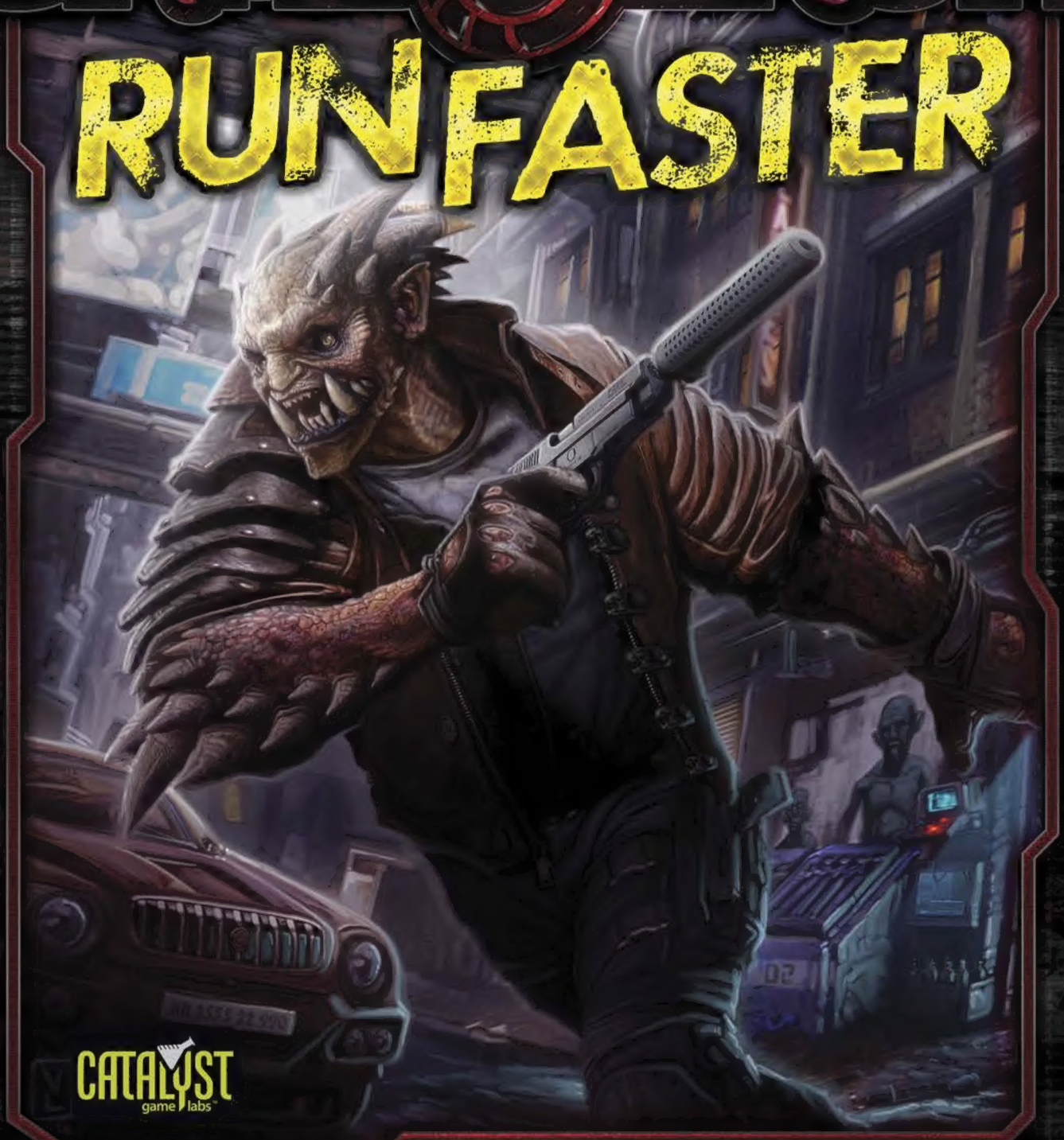
SHADOWRUN

RUN FASTER



CATALYST game labs

CORE PLAYER HANDBOOK

THE COST OF GREATNESS

Every step, every advantage, every millisecond counts. The streets of the Sixth World are mean, and if they want to stay alive, shadowrunners need every advantage they can get to gain a step on the opposition. Fortunately, *Run Faster* is full of them. With it, you can learn about more metatypes for characters, including hobgoblins, giants, centaurs, and sasquatch; acquire new qualities, such as Disgraced, Hawk Eye, and Lightning Reflexes; and, if you dare, dabble with the dangerous and deadly Infected.

Run Faster also has advice on fleshing out characters of different metatypes, expanded contact and lifestyle rules, and alternate character creation methods to help ensure that players can build exactly the character they want.

All these options make *Run Faster* a crucial companion to players who want to get the most out of their *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* core rulebook.

SHADOWRUN
FIFTH EDITION

Under License From

CATALYST game labs

Topps

www.catalystgamelabs.com

© 2014-16 The Topps Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Shadowrun and Matrix are registered trademarks and/or trademarks of The Topps Company, Inc., in the United States and/or other countries. Catalyst Game Labs and the Catalyst Game Labs logo are trademarks of InMediaRes Productions, LLC. Printed in the USA.

RUN FASTER
CATALYST
game labs

INTRODUCTION 11
WHO YOU ARE AND HOW YOU GOT HERE 12
WHERE YOU CAME FROM 12
The Corps: Outward Mobility 12
The Streets: Out of the Frying Pan 13
The Talented: When the Going Gets Weird 14
Hooders and Activists: Building Communities (One Bomb at a Time) 15
Academics: Things Metahumanity Really Needs to Know 15
Military and Law Enforcement: The Other Side of the Wall 15
The Unclassifiable 16
I'M A REAL BOY NOW 16
LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH 17
I'll Work With You, But I Don't Like You 17
Who Can You Trust? 17
GAME INFORMATION 18
Backgrounds and Motivations: What Makes Johnny Run? 18
Making 'Real' Runners: Beyond the AK-97 20
ETHICS, CODES AND OTHER JOKES 22
A CODE AND A CALLING 22
The Path of the Samurai 22
Omerta, the Code of Silence 25
Thug Life, the Code of the Streets 26
Harmony with Nature, the Shaman's Code 26
White Hats, the Code of the Hacker 27
The Code of Wuxia 27
The Paladin's Code (a.k.a. Elven Chivalry) 28
The Hippocratic Oath 28
The Soldier's Code 29
The Akichita Code 29
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN 30
Bushido 2.0 30
The Code of the White Hat 31
The Code of the Good Cop 31
The Hermetic Code 32
THE SPICE OF RUNNER'S LIVES
ODD JOBS 34
Hunting 34
Reagents 34
Paranimals 34
Spirits 34
Head Cases 35
Infected 35
STRANGE LOCALES 35
Oceanic Operations 35
Space Runs 36
Fovea Runs 36
Astral Journeys 36
THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS 37
Mom & Pops 38
Arcane Organizations 38
Governments 39
Organized Crime 39
Secret Societies 40
Head Cases 41
ALTERNATE IDENTITIES 42
DocWagon 42
Knight Errant/Lone Star 42
Corporations 42
Organized Crime 42
MORE THAN SKIN DEEP 44
BUILDING AN IDENTITY 45
BEARDS: DWARFS 45
Great Duchy of Westrhine-Luxembourg (AGS) 47
How Dwarfs Fit Into Society 47
EARS: ELVES 48
Tir na nÓg 49
Tir Tairngire 49
Zulu Nation (Azanian Confederation) 49
Duchy of Pomorya (AGS) 49
How Elves Fit Into Society 49
TUSKS: ORKS 50
Ork Underground, Seattle, UCAS 51
Black Forest Troll Republic (AGS) 51
Kingdoms of Nigeria 51
How Orks Fit Into Society 51
HORNS: TROLLS 52
Black Forest Troll Republic (AGS) 52
How Trolls Fit Into Society 53
NORMS: HUMANS 54
How Humans Fit Into Society 54
FREAKS: CHANGELINGS 55
FURS: SHAPESHIFTERS 55
ALTERATIONS AND AUGMENTATIONS 56
Alterations 56
Augmentations 57
EvoCulture 57
CONSTRUCTION KITS 62
A RANGE OF OPTIONS 62
SUM TO TEN GENERATION 62
Building Characters with Sum To Ten 62
POINT BUY 64
LIFE MODULES 65
Nationalities 66
United Canadian and American States (UCAS) 66
Confederation of American States (CAS) 66
Native American Nations (NAN) 66
Tir Tairngire 67
Formative Years 67
Arcology Living 67
Corp Drone 68
Farm Living 68
Fugitive 68
Isolated Rural Upbringing 68
Military Brat 69
Orphan 69
Rich Kid 69
Street Urchin 69
White Collar 69
Teen Years 70
Corporate Education 70
Farm Living 70
Gang Warfare 70
High School 70
Home Tutored 70
Isolated Rural Upbringing 71
Magical Education 71
Military School 71
Preparatory School 71
Street Kid 72
Further Education 72
Community College (55) 72
Ivy League University (80) 73
Military Academy (115) 73
State University or College (65) 75
Trade School/Technical College (40) 75
Real Life 76
Bounty Hunter 76
Celebrity 76
Combat Correspondent 76
Corporate 77
Covert Operations 77
Drifter 77
Ganger 78
Government Agent 78
Law Enforcement 78
Organized Crime 78
Political Activist 79
Postgraduate Studies 79
Private Investigator/Detective (PI) 79
Regular Job 79
Shadow Work (Shadowrunner) 80
Terrorist 81
Think Tank 81
Tours of Duty 82
Tour of Duty (Mercenary) 82
Tour of Duty (NAN) 82
Tour of Duty (Tir Tairngire) 82
Tour of Duty (UCAS, CAS, and CFS) 83
Finishing Off Your Karmic Balance 84
Sample Modular Character Generation 84
NEW QUALITY 86
Rank 86
THE MESS OF METAHUMANITY 88
SAPIENTS OF THE SIXTH WORLD 88
DWARFS 88
Metavariant Type: Gnome 88
Metavariant Type: Hanuman 88
Metavariant Type: Koborokuru 90
Metavariant Type: Menehune 90
ORKS 91
Metavariant Type: Hobgoblin 91
Metavariant Type: Ogre 91
Metavariant Type: Oni 92
Metavariant Type: Satyr 92
TROLLS 93
Metavariant Type: Cyclops 93
Metavariant Type: Fomorian 93
Metavariant Type: Giant 94
Metavariant Type: Minotaur 94
ELVES 95
Metavariant Type: Dryad 95
Metavariant Type: Nocturna 95
Metavariant Type: Wakyambi 96
Metavariant Type: Xapiri Thëpë 97
HUMANS 97
Metavariant Type: Nartaki 97
METASAPIENTS 98
Centaur 98
Naga 98
Pixie 99
Sasquatch 99
Shapeshifters 100
Changelings 101
CREATING SOMETHING DIFFERENT 101
Creating a Metavariant Character 102
Creating a Shapeshifter 102
Creating a Changeling 103
Random Metagenic Qualities 108
POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES 111
360-Degree Eyesight 111
Animal Pelage 111
Arcane Arrester 111
Balance Receptor 112
Beak 112
Bicardiac 112
Biosonar 112
Bone Spikes 112

Broadened Auditory Spectrum 112
Camouflage 113
Celerity 113
Claws 113
Climate Adaptation 113
Corrosive Spit 113
Dermal Alteration 113
Dermal Deposits 114
Defensive Secretion 114
Electroception 114
Elongated Limbs 114
Fangs 115
Frog Tongue 115
Functional Tail 115
Gills 115
Glamour 115
Goring Horns 115
Greasy Skin 116
Keen-Eared 116
Larger Tusks 116
Low-Light Vision 116
Magic Sense 116
Magnetoception 116
Marsupial Pouch 116
Metagenic (Attribute) Improvement 116
Metahuman Traits 116
Monkey Paws 116
Nasty Vibe 117
Natural Venom 117
Ogre Stomach 117
Photometabolism 117
Proboscis 117
Satyr Legs 118
Setae 118
Shiva Arms 118
Thermal Sensitivity 118
Thermographic Vision 118
Thorns 118
Underwater Vision 118
Vomeronasal Organ 118
Webbed Digits 119

NEGATIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES 119
Adiposis 119
Astral Hazing 119
Berserker 119
Bioluminescence 119
Cephalopod Skull 120
Cold-blooded 120
Critter Spook 120
Cyclopean Eye 120
Deformity 120
Feathers 120
Impaired (Attribute) 120
Insectoid Features 121
Mood Hair 121
Neoteny 121
Nocturnal 121
Progeria 121
Scales 121
Scent Glands 121
Slow Healer 122
Striking Skin Pigmentation 122
Stubby Arms 122
Symbiosis 122
Third Eye 122
Unusual Hair 122
Vestigial Tail 123

INTO THE NIGHT 124

A NIGHT IN THE LIFE 125

The Last Night 125
The First Night … 126
… And All the Rest to Come 126
What It's Like To Walk The Night 127
Hunters Hunted 128
Giving In 128
It's You and Us 130

WALK IN THE SHADOWS 131

We Care a Lot 131
Dancing in the Ruins 132

GAME INFORMATION 133

Creating Infected Characters 133
Becoming Infected During Play 134
Positive Infected Qualities 136
Bandersnatch 136
Banshee 136
Dzoo-noo-qua 137
Fomóraig 138
Ghoul 138
Gnawer 138
Goblin 138
Grendel 139
Harvester 139
Loup-garou 139
Mutaqua 139
Nosferatu 139
Vampire 140
Wendigo 140
Negative Infected Qualities 141
Carrier 141
Infection, Magic, Resonance, & Essence 141
Magic and Essence 141
Infection and Resonance 142
Diseases 142
Sample Diseases 142
HMHVV Strain I 142
HMHVV Strain II 142
HMHVV Strain III 143
New Critter Powers 143
Adaptive Coloration 143
Corrosive Secretions 143

AS YOU AS YOU CAN BE 144

QUALITIES FOR GOOD OR ILL 144

Positive Qualities 144
Adrenaline Surge 145
Animal Empathy 145
Black Market Pipeline 145
Born Rich 145
City Slicker 145
College Education 145
Common Sense 145
Daredevil 146
Digital Doppelganger 146
Disgraced 146
Erased 146
Fame 146
Friends in High Places 147
Hawk Eye 147
Inspired 147
Jack of All Trades, Master of None 147
Lightning Reflexes 148
Linguist 148
Made Man 148
Night Vision 148
Outdoorsman 148
Overclocker 148
Perceptive 148
Perfect Time 148
Poor Link 148
Privileged Family Name 149
Restricted Gear 149
School of Hard Knocks 149
Sense of Direction 149
Sensei 149
Solid/Legendary Rep 149
Speed Reading 149
Spike Resistance 150
Spirit Whisperer 150
Steely Eyed Wheelman 150
Technical School Education 150
Tough as Nails 150
Trust Fund 151
Trustworthy 151
Vehicle Empathy 151
Water Sprite 151
Witness My Hate (Magicians only) 151

NEGATIVE QUALITIES 151
Albinism 151
Amnesia 152
Asthma 152
Bi-polar 152
Big Regret 153
Blind 153
Borrowed Time 153
Computer Illiterate 153
Creature of Comfort 153
Day Job 154
Deaf 154
Did You Just Call Me Dumb? 154
Dimmer Bulb 154
Driven 154
Emotional Attachment 154
Ex-Con 155
Flashbacks 155
Hobo with a Shotgun 155
Hung Out to Dry 155
Illiterate 155
In Debt 156
Incomplete Deprogramming 156
Infirm 156
Liar 156
Night Blindness 156
Oblivious 157
Pacifist 157
Paranoia 157
Paraplegic 157
Phobia 157
Pie Iesu Domine. Dona eis Requiem. 158
Poor Self Control 158
Records on File 158
Reduced (Sense) 159
Sensory Overload Syndrome 159
Signature 159
Vendetta 159
Wanted 159

WHO YOU KNOW 172

INTRODUCTION 172

Breakdown of Contact Types 172
Legwork 172
Networking 173
Swag 173
Shadow Services 173
Personal Favors 173
Support 173
The Cost: What Does a Contact Want? 173
Cash 173
Services 173
Barter 174
Other 174
I Owe You One (Gaining Chips) 176
Improve Relationship 176
Future Service 176
Favors 176
Group or Organization Contact Options 176
Nature of the Relationship 178
Blackmail 178

Family 178
Maintaining Contact Relations 178
Paying off Debt 178
Using Intimidation 178
Using Con/Seduction 178
When Your Reputation Precedes You 178
Burning Bridges 179
Quick Contact Personality Generator 179

SAMPLE CONTACTS 182

Arms Dealer 182
Bartender 182
Bodyguard 182
Bookie 183
Border Patrol Agent 183
Bounty Hunter 183
Chop Shop Mechanic 183
Church Pastor 184
City Official 184
Club Kid 184
Company Suit 184
Con Fanatic 184
Corporate Administrator 185
Corporate WageSlave 186
Coyote 186
Cybernetic Technician 186
Government Official 186
Gang Boss 187
Id Manufacturer 187
Informant 188
International Courier 188
Lone Star Detective 188
Knight Errant Dispatcher 188
Mafia Consigliere 189
Media Mogul 189
Metahuman Rights Activist 189
News Reporter 190
Parazoologist 190
Pawn broker 190
Pharmacy Tech 190
Popular MeFeed Personality 191
Recicladore 191
Rent-a-Cop 192
RockStar 192
Safehouse Master 192
Script Kiddie 192
Sprawl Ganger 193
Squatter 193
Store Owner 193
Street Doc 193
Street Kid 194
Talismonger 194
Taxi Driver 194
TerraFirst! Activist 194
Trid Pirate 195
Used Car Salesman 195

BOSSES AND BETRAYERS 196

JOHNSONS AND FIXERS BASICS 196

LIFECYCLE OF AN ENGAGEMENT 197

The Meet 197
The Run 199
The Handoff 200

I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS 201

JOHNSON GENESIS 202

Megacorporate 202
Big Ten Johnsons 203
Ares Macrotechnology 204
Aztechnology 204
Evo Corporation 204
Horizon 204
Mitsuhama Computer Technologies 204
NeoNET 205
Renraku Computer Systems 205
Saeder-Krupp 205
Shiawase Corporation 205
Wuxing Incorporated 206
Syndicate 206
Major Syndicates 207
Mafia 208
Yakuza 208
Triads 208
Vory 208
Extremists 208
Extremist Organizations 210
Amateurs 211

A DUMP OF ONE'S OWN 212

What's in a Lifestyle? 213
Comforts 213
Necessities 214
Security 215
Neighborhood 215
Entertainment 215
Services 215
Assets 216
Game Information 216
Bolt Hole 216
Street 217
Squatter 218
Low 218
Medium 218
High 218
Luxury 218
Traveler 218
Commercial 218

LIFESTYLE CATEGORIES 218

Comforts & Necessities 218
Security 219
Neighborhood 219
Entertainment 219
Armory 220
Cleaning Service 220
Discreet Cleaning Service 221
Discreet Deliveryman/Candyman 221
Garage 221
Greenhouse 221
Grid Subscription 222
Gym 222
Indoor Arboretum 222
Local Bar Patron 222
Merchandise: Goods (Specific Item) 222
Merchandise: Pawn Shop/Thrift Store 222
Merchandise: Used Goods (Specific Item) 222
Panic Room 222
Patron of the Arts 223
Private Room 223
Public Transportation 223
Railway Pass 223
Shooting Range 223
Soy Processing Unit 223
Sports Court (Small) [Sport] 224
Swimming Pool 224
Walk-in Freezer 224
Workshop/Facility 224
Yard 224
Zen Den/Bat Cave 224
Lifestyle Options 224
Angry Drunk Reputation (Negative) 224
Corporate Owned (Positive) 224
Cramped (Negative) 225
Extra Secure (Positive) 225
Hotel California (Negative) 226
Maid is Out (Negative) 226
Not a Home (Negative) 226
Obscure/Difficult to Find (Negative) 226
One Good Thing About This Place (Positive) 226
Safehouse (Positive) 226
Safety Third (Negative) 226
Special Work Area (Positive) 226
Thrifty (Negative) 226
W Zone (Negative) 226
Maintaining a Lifestyle 226
Sample Locations 227
The Cube, Tokyo (Coffin Hotel) 227
The Millennium, Los Angeles (Standard Hotel) 227
Red Light District Safehouse 227
Robyn's 227
Stuffer Shack 227
Typical Middle Class Suburban Home 227

PACK YOUR KIT 228

EQUIPMENT PACKS 228

Core PACKS 228
Intro Runner PACK 228
Basic Runner PACK 228
Advanced Runner PACK 229

WEAPON AND AMMO PACKS 229

Classic Samurai PACK 229
Up Close &
Personal PACK 230
Blademaster PACK 231
Monowhip PACK 231
Basic Bowman PACK 231
Advanced Bowman PACK 231
Ares Pistol PACK 231
Big Boom Pistol PACK 231
Browning and Beretta Pistol PACK 232
Colt Pistol PACK 232

© 2014-16 The Topps Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Shadowrun, Matrix, and Run Faster are registered trademarks and/or trademarks of The Topps Company, Inc., in the United States and/or other countries. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the Copyright Owner, nor be otherwise circulated in any form other than that in which it is published. Catalyst Game Labs and the Catalyst Game Labs logo are trademarks of InMediaRes Productions, LLC.

Second Printing by Catalyst Game Labs, an imprint of InMediaRes Productions, LLC
PMB 202 • 303 -91st Ave. NE, E-502
Lake Stevens, WA 98258

Find us online:
info@shadowruntabletop.com
(*Shadowrun* questions)
http://www.shadowruntabletop.com
(Catalyst *Shadowrun* website)
http://www.shadowrun.com
(official *Shadowrun Universe* website)
http://www.catalystgamelabs.com
(Catalyst website)
http://shop.catalystgamelabs.com
(Catalyst/Shadowrun orders)

Subtle Pistol PACK 232
Light Security PACK 232
Japanacorp Light Security PACK 232
Smartgun PACK 233
Street Slugger PACK 233
Heavy Security PACK 233
Cheap Soldier PACK 233
Ares Alpha Gunner PACK 233
Sniper PACK 234
Sportsman PACK 234
Tranq Darter PACK 234
Squad Assault Weapon PACK 234
Medium Machine Gunner PACK 234
Rocketeer PACK 235
Machine Gun Ammo Belt PACK 235
Ammo Crate #1 235
Ammo Crate #2 235
Ammo Crate #3 235
Ammo Crate #4 235
Ammo Crate #5 235
Box of Grenades #1 236
Box of Grenades #2 236

ARMOR PACKS 236

City Slicker PACK 236
Go Anywhere Jacket PACK 236
Neon Nights PACK 237
Nightbird PACK 237
Stylish Suit PACK 237
Tactical Helmet PACK 237
Tusker Toughskin PACK 237
Tanker PACK 238

CYBER PACKS 238

Budget 'Jack PACK 238
Standard 'Jack PACK 238
Advanced 'Jack PACK 238
Basic Wires PACK 239
Advanced Wires PACK 239
Tourist PACK 239
World Traveler PACK 239
Ambassador PACK 239
Diploma-on-a-Chip PACK 239
Degree-on-a-Chip PACK 240
Doctorate-on-a-Chip PACK 240
Vacation-on-a-Chip PACK 240
Competence-on-a-Chip PACK 240
Datacourier PACK 240
Sim-sational PACK 241
Basic Combat Eyes PACK 241
Advanced Combat Eyes PACK 241
Eagle Eyes PACK 241
Rabbit Ears PACK 241
Bulletproof Jeff PACK 241
Basic Razorboi PACK 242
Advanced Razorboi PACK 242
Basic Speedboost PACK 242
Advanced Speedboost PACK 242
Basic Vatjob PACK 242
Advanced Vatjob PACK 242
Basic Rigger PACK 243
Advanced Rigger PACK 243
Street Samurai Classic PACK 243
Bioware Beef PACK 243
Bioware Lean PACK 243
Bioware Cat PACK 243
Bio-Computer PACK 243
Bioware Company Man PACK 244

LIFESTYLE PACKS 244

Bug-Out Bag 244
Street Rat PACK 244
Lowlife PACK 244
Success in the Shadows PACK 244
High Life PACK 245

COLOR PACKS 245

Cocktail Kid PACK 245
Gunbunny PACK 245
Drone Mechanic PACK 245
Mechanic Shop PACK 245
Eavesdropper PACK 246
Surveillance PACK 246
Breaking and Entering PACK 246
Jammer PACK 246
Medic PACK 246
Medical Patches PACK 246
Mountaineering PACK 247
Infiltration PACK 247
Demolitionist PACK 247

VEHICLE PACKS 247

Bunny Hopper PACK 247
Racing Bike PACK 247
Combat Biker PACK 248
All-American PACK 248
Team Van PACK 248
Off Road PACK 248
Non-combat Rigger PACK 248
Combat Rigger PACK 248

DECKER PACKS 248

Intro to Hacking PACK 248
Basic Decker PACK 249
Advanced Decker PACK 249
Basic Cyberdeck Programs PACK 249
Advanced Cyberdeck Programs PACK 249

DRONE PACKS 249

Basic Drone Commander PACK 249
Advanced Drone Commander PACK 249
Rigger Support PACK 250
Dog Brain PACK 250
Basic Spy Drone PACK 250
Advanced Spy Drone PACK 250
Basic Combat Drone PACK 250
Advanced Combat Drone PACK 250
Air Combat Drone 251
Advanced Air Combat Drone PACK 251

MAGIC PACKS 251

Basic Magician PACK 251
Advanced Magician PACK 251
Magic Wand PACK 251
Magic Staff PACK 251
Basic Medicine Bag PACK 251
Advanced Medicine Bag PACK 252
Basic Spirit Stick PACK 252
Advanced Spirit Stick PACK 252
Magic Spear PACK 252

Buying the Basics 252

RUN FASTER CREDITS

Writing: Raymond Croteau, Kevin Czarnecki, Olivier Gagnon, Patrick Goodman, Jason M. Hardy, Robyn "Rat" King, Adam Large, Eric Lyon-Taylor, Scott Schletz, William Stroud, R.J. Thomas, Thomas Willoughby, Russell Zimmerman

Editing: Kevin Killiany, Philip A. Lee

Proofing: Lars Wagner Hansen, Mason Hart, Andrew Marshall, Tim Patrick, CZ Wright

Art Direction: Brent Evans

Cover Art: Victor Manuel Leza Moreno

Original Cover Art: Echo Chernik

Cover Layout: Matt "Beardo" Heerdt

Iconography: Nigel Sade

Interior Art: Piotr Arendzikowski, Daniel Comerci, Lucas Durham, Matt Hansen, David Hovey, Ian King, Ian Llanas, Dan Masso, Jason Metcalf, Victor Moreno, Mike Perry, Kristen Plescow, Mark Poole, Andrea Radeck, Mickael Rookard, Andreas "AAS" Schroth, Alex Stone, Eric Williams, and Alex Williamson

Interior Layout: Matt "Beardo" Heerdt

Shadowrun Line Developer: Jason M. Hardy

Playtesting & Proofing: Natalie Aked, Rob Aked, Jackson Bruntsing, Karlene Dickens, Derek Dokter, Bruce Ford, Eugen Fournes, Joanna Fournes, Sandy Gamboa, Tim Gray, Kendall Jung, Alex Kadar, Peter Leitch, Dave Lundquest, Chris Maxfield, Jon Naughton, Whitney Pace, Sue Powell, Richard Riessen, Matt Riley, Mark Somers, Dylan Stangel, Ashley Turkowski, Leland Zavadil

DECADE

With his hands shaking uncontrollably, Victor Edwards tried desperately to close the last few clasps on his ill-fitting tactical vest. The vest, like the rest of his equipment, was a hand-me-down that once belonged to one of the four individuals crammed into the back of the little delivery van with him. At least they cared enough to give him some semblance of protection.

Only a few days ago Edwards was an insignificant executive with a no-name subsidiary of a giant megacorporation. But thanks to another group of men, not dissimilar from his companions in the van, Edwards had become nothing more than a discarded bit of refuse. He'd been played like a fiddle by a beautiful woman. And as that tale usually goes, he took the fall for her deception in the form of unauthorized use of his access card. No one ever mentioned the missing R&D files, only the breach in security thanks to his uncontrollable urges.

Despite a lifetime of faithful service to Aggregate Consumables, and in turn Ares Macrotechnology, the powers that be decided he was no longer of any value. And when you're no longer valuable to the megacorporations you are simply discarded, erased, removed from existence, and left to fade away; or, if you can pull it off, to slip into the shadows.

Edwards wasn't sure he was making a good choice, or even a choice. He was doing the only thing that seemed to have a chance of keeping him alive. Less than a day before, Edwards had been on the verge of using the only piece of gear he actually owned on himself. He had picked up the Ares Predator V for a steal when the company first started advertising them. He'd never had a desire to own a firearm before and had virtually no training on it, but there was something about that matte-black finish and wicked V that called to him.

But apparently it wasn't his time to die. The universe decided that it was the right time for the four men he was now sharing a vehicle with to burst into his life.

He remembered the door flying inward, twisting on the one hinge that held against the augmented jackhammer that Turk called a leg. He didn't know the big ork's name at that moment, but he knew he'd made him angry somehow as the ork bellowed a single word—"Gun!"—and leveled his massive shotgun at Edwards' terror-filled gaze. The massive barrel looked like a train tunnel.

In the back of his mind he spotted the lithe elf slipping past the ork but truly didn't notice him until he had blocked the barrel. By then Quill's hands were deftly removing the

BY SCOTT SCHLETZ

Predator from Edwards' suddenly numb fingers. As the elf spun away, Edwards met the rest of the team. Tare, a velvety-voiced human who looked like he stepped right out of a trid flick, and Mo, another human, with a voice like gravel and a mohawk that looked like it was made of stone, were standing in the room next to Turk. The shotgun lowered, and Edwards' new life began.

XXX

Sitting in the dank little room on the upper floor of an abandoned library in Puyallup less than a day later, Edwards still hadn't managed to get his bearings with the four men. He had no issue when they ordered him to go with them; it even seemed a little exciting. When Quill offered him a little something to help him sleep, he took it because the adrenaline and hard floor of Turk's place had teamed up to make sleep impossible. When he woke up, head throbbing, Turk rushed him down to the van, which drove to the library much faster than his headache would have liked, and again he was prodded along.

The three present, Turk, Quill, and Mo, were arguing rather loudly about something called "blood magic," which apparently was fueled by the life force of sacrifice victims. Edwards could tell they were talking for his benefit, making up one tale after another, each more outrageous than the one before. He felt embarrassed that these men chose such an obvious children's bogeyman story in an attempt to frighten him. He knew they thought he was a complete corporate chump.

The trio went quiet when they heard someone approaching, and they were all seated around the remains of a conference table when Tare stepped in. He was dressed more casually than the others but still perfectly put together, and though the trio was obviously where they belonged when he came in, he still gave them all a disapproving stare.

"Hey Cobain, come join us," Mo said to no one in particular. Victor was pretty sure he meant him, but they could have been talking to a spirit, some hidden companion, or virtually anything. He'd seen the shows about runners and the tricks they had up their sleeves.

"He's talking to you, Vic," Quill said while looking at Edwards. "I guess you've got a street name now. Beats me what it means. Maybe Mo will tell you someday."

Edwards stood up and joined them but stayed quiet other than a quick thank you and polite excuse me when his

stress-addled bowels unleashed a low force toxic cloud. Turk and Mo chuckled a little, while Tare and Quill said nothing. Tare then motioned to the empty seat at the table.

"Now for the real business," Tare said. "Mr. Johnson wants the R&D files and a face-to-face with Betty to discuss the ramifications of her excess of independence. Ed—err, Cobain—is our lure. I'll make him look dandy. Quill, you move up to the rear balcony and get ready to slip in quietly." Tare paused and gave Turk a quick narrow-eyed glare. Edwards guessed there was something he was missing, but within a few seconds Tare continued.

"Turk, you'll need the ruthenium. I'll put a shroud over you, but I'll be sustaining a lot. Best be safe. You'll be right on Cobain. When Betty buzzes him in, you need to be right behind him. Once you're both in, my arcane assistance will fizzle. Wedge the door and I'll be fifteen seconds behind."

Edwards listened in growing confusion. He understood they'd given him a street name, pretty cool, though he didn't understand it. He knew they were after R&D files and a person named Betty, and he knew he was somehow part of the plan; maybe even an important part. But none of that seemed to match up with being kidnapped.

"Quill, you watch Betty. If she makes us, give us the warning and keep eyes on her," Tare wrapped it up with a look at each person in the room, saving Edwards for last and holding on him.

Edwards looked around at the others who were all looking at him. He really wanted to try and play it cool, pretend he had a clue, but he had a feeling he was sitting through some kind of test. The kind of test you don't dare to guess on. After what seemed an infinite silence, Edwards finally asked, "Why am I here?"

Tare's reply and a piece of electropaper with a picture on it that he slid across the table said it all, "Revenge, dear Victor. Does Betty look familiar?"

She did. And he understood.

XXX

10 Years Later

Cobain stared out through the rain-speckled glass at the skyline of Boston. The soft hum and lilt of classical music played through the ship's sound system. It was louder in the ballroom, but continued everywhere, a link between all the guests, no matter where they were, and a reminder of what they were here for. Well, what most of the guests were here for; Cobain was not on board the XS10SHL for dancing, and neither were at least two other guests on board the 110-meter luxury yacht. Despite his professional purpose on the boat, he couldn't help but think of how beautiful the city was at night.

"A beautiful view," a voice behind him spoke, putting words to Cobain's thoughts. He saw Quill's pale features reflected in the glass as the elf stepped closer.

"Aztechnology ruined it," Cobain replied to Quill's coded phrase, telling him everyone was in place with his own affirmative. The team was a go to acquire the package that Aztechnology had brought on board.

As jobs go, this one had been smooth. Not because there hadn't been opposition or unforeseen hiccups, but because Cobain had planned it well. Turk's protégé Gas Crank was doing well. He had a good combination of Turk's brute-force militaristic style and his own touch of anarchistic finesse. Six clean runs with the team was not a full season, but enough to shatter the rookie's false sense of what "running" really meant. Earlier he had cleanly dealt with a half-dozen gangers playing muscle on the docks and a pair of genuine mob toughs who wouldn't let their greed override their pride. Now he was wearing a slick new suit with a very bright green kerchief sticking out of the pocket, and mingling with the other guests.

Quill had been his usual smooth and fast self. The decade since they'd met had not slowed him, though the cost of the upgrades he'd acquired always kept him looking for the next job. His quick fingers had lifted the half-dozen genuine paper invites they'd needed to get on board, and left behind copies with a few creative adjustments earlier in the week. The original invitees would be one hour behind and ten kilometers north, looking to sail out of Marblehead by the time they discovered the switch.

That little trick had cost the team some nuyen and Turk. He was willing to take a back seat and sit on the forger to make sure she didn't decide to look for a better deal. It was probably a much-needed break. Cobain respected his longtime teammate, but thirty-six was old, on the back nine of an ork's eighteen holes of life. A few days of much-needed R&R holed up at the Revere Beach MegaResort with a not-unattractive forger would be good for him.

After all of that, Cobain, Quill, and Gas Crank were left to do the actual steal. They should be enough. The team didn't have anyone else right now anyway. Cobain had taken over for Tare almost five years ago when their former face got a break with Horizon and stepped from the shadows into the light. At the time, he'd felt a little twinge of jealousy, but since his own fall from the light, Cobain had only a few regrets. A woman he'd wished he was able to hold on to, a few runs he'd wished he'd done better legwork on, and a good friend he would have preferred was still breathing. But all told, his decade of running had been a far better life than his score of years under the thumb of the megacorporations. He looked at others still in that life with sadness.

That sadness was Mo's influence on him. The neo-anarchist chided him for being one of the "sheeple" on a daily basis for months after they'd met, especially when Cobain

asked about the origins of his street name. Mo never gave him a straight answer, but Cobain found out the truth after Mo had lost his fight with lung cancer two months ago. At the man's remembrance, Mo's sister pulled out an old compact disc player from the end of the last century. She slipped in one of those old flat discs and told everyone that this had been Mo's favorite music. She talked briefly about the band, Nirvana, and the start of their countercultural revolution that was crushed by the rising power of the megacorporations. When Cobain introduced himself to Mo's sister to ask about the band and the songs, she stopped him cold and asked him his street name. When he told her Mo gave it to him she hugged Cobain tight and told him how much Mo must have loved him to have given him such an honor. When she explained that Cobain was the last name of the lead singer, who had killed himself when Nirvana's music had been bowdlerized and popularized, he understood.

Mo would have loved their current job. It was right up his alley. The target was a silver case, currently attached to the wrist of a very burly Aztlaner in the company of Juan Gualara, Director of International Infrastructure Analysis Programs for Aztechnology. The case holder was a member of his security detail, who also happened to be a former member of the Leopard Guard with Aztechnology Corporate Security. Gualara had been invited to the yacht in order to get ACS's man in place to make a quiet deal with a member of TerraFirst! concerning the contents of the case. All information Mr. Johnson had left out at the initial meet, but Cobain had made sure was dug up, because working blind was no way to run.

When Quill silently slipped away, a shadow fading from the glass, Cobain turned his attention away from the lights of the Boston skyline. He calmly slipped the mother-of-pearl buttons back through the nearly invisible buttonhole slots in his Armanté suit coat, his movements smooth and confident. With the coat open, he pulled the concealed Fichetti pistol from its custom-fit holster and dropped it into the narrow vent below the window that kept them from icing over or fogging up. The pistol was no longer part of the plan for him; best be rid of it.

He made a few more cosmetic alterations to his dress, loosening his bowtie and twisting it askew, untucking the left side of his shirt, and running his fingers through the side of his hair to disrupt the gelled perfection. The illusion he was creating needed only one final touch.

Drawing a small flask from his inner pocket, Cobain opened it and poured the contents into his mouth. His entire body shuddered when the rotgut synthwhiskey hit his tongue. He gave the liquid a good swish around his mouth before spraying the foul substance in a fine mist into the air before him. He briskly stepped through the spray, spinning to cover as much of himself as he could before slipping into character and stumbling toward the outer deck.

Feigning drunk, he staggered through a course that gave him a chance to spot all six of the people he needed eyes on. Juan, the Azzie exec, was inside seated at a table visible through the rear deck glass. Burly Azzie with the case was walking away from the table and headed toward the rear deck. TerraFirst! was standing near the fore, seemingly engaged in a pleasant conversation with Gas Crank. Lastly, Quill was leaning over the railing above, looking out into the night. Everyone was where they needed to be.

Cobain set the plan in motion by staggering along down the side of the boat. With one hand on the rail and the other holding his glass, he stumbled and sloshed champagne, worth more per ounce than gold, all over the deck and his clothes. He intentionally lost his grip on the rail as Burly Azzie stepped out onto the rear deck and toppled into the bulky Aztlaner.

"What the ... watch it," the Azzie blurted.

"Oh, my god, I am so sorry," Cobain slurred while clumsily groping at the Azzie and splashing champagne down the man's sleeve.

"I think you've had enough," Burly Azzie said. He pulled Cobain back.

Cobain moved back with the pull. He'd managed to do what he needed to, and now needed to give the big guy a little space.

"Enough or not, my glass is empty again. Excuse me," Cobain slurred and stumbled toward the server.

Burly Azzie grunted something in Neo-Nahuatl but did just as expected, heading around the corner and along the walkway at the side of the ship, moving toward TerraFirst!.

Cobain gave him a small lead before turning back and doing his best stagger-walk straight at the big ruddy-skinned Azzie. He started his verbal tirade a good ten meters out to give the Azzie time to turn. When he got close he bellowed out, "Who are you to tell me when I've had enough?!" and gave Burly a shove. It wasn't much, but it got the desired response: a return shove.

Cobain flailed and stumbled back toward the rail. Burly Azzie had some boosted reflexes that made him quick enough to step forward and grab Cobain, catching him before he went overboard. The only problem was Cobain had a nicer system, along with some enhanced muscle fibers, and no desire to be caught. Instead he wanted the Azzie's momentum. He used it to hurl the man overboard as he fell to the ground. As far as anyone watching was concerned it looked like an accident.

Above, Quill yelled, "Man overboard!" and leaped from the upper deck towards the water. His flailing impact ensured he didn't sink too deep. He was able to almost immediately adjust his direction to head toward the Azzie.

Down the way, Gas Crank and TerraFirst! turned to watch the drunken altercation. When Burly Azzie went overboard, TerraFirst! turned to Gas Crank and raised a hand palm up. "Please back away. I must demand the aid of the spirits for that man." Gas Crank gave his best look of shock and took a step back.

When TerraFirst! closed his eyes and started to mumble, Gas Crank rescinded his backward step while engaging the muscle twitch that made a long blade slide from his forearm sheath. The mumbles turned to gurgles as Gas Crank drove the blade through the shaman's neck, then ceased completely when he pulled the blade hard to the side and half-decapitated the man. He hefted the body over the side with one arm while driving the spur through the abdomen a few more times to puncture the lungs and organs. The shaman's body hit the water only a moment after Quill.

Cobain stood and ran inside to call for help. The boat's staff immediately leaped into action. The guests reacted as one might expect and quickly ran to the side of the banquet hall to peer out the windows at the scene. In moments, commlink cameras and recorders were taking in the entire scene and posting it to MeFeeds and P2.0 accounts.

In the water, Quill quickly reached Burly Azzie, who was barely able to stay afloat due to the case, and helped pull him toward the side of the boat. As they reached the hull, Quill deftly plunged a small pin into the keyhole of the cuff attached to the case on Burly Azzie's wrist and pricked the small packet Cobain had pressed into the hole when he bumped the big Azzie earlier. Still struggling just to stay above water, Burly Azzie had no chance to notice what was happening. Quill clipped a D-ring over the handle of the case and slipped another cuff onto the Azzie's wrist. He pulled the original cuff open thanks to the now acid-eaten lock and let the case fall away. The target case sank about three meters before the line attached to the D-ring went taut, then started rising. Before that case was even on the rise, Quill had already released the dummy case hidden below the waterline of the boat and inserted its chain into the cuff on Burly Azzie's wrist.

When the crew pulled them both back up onto the boat, Burly Azzie was none the wiser. He spent the remainder of the cruise surrounded by medical personnel and never noticed his contact was missing. Quill spent the trip alternating between telling passengers he wasn't a hero, it was just instinct, and telling the crew how sorry he was for making it two men overboard and that he should leave the rescuing to the professionals.

Cobain found a quiet place to open the case and switch the contents to a concealed container. He found a data chip, four pieces of parchment he was uncomfortably certain were skin, eight small leather—or so he hoped—bags, and an obsidian dagger that was meticulously decorated and remarkably unmarred, despite its frailty. Everything in the case screamed blood magic. He took some images and video, including unrolling the parchment to reveal some rather unpleasant images that made him thankful he couldn't read the writing. He then copied the chip and sent all the data off to a friend.

Cobain's years in the shadows had taught him that when it comes to Azzies and blood magic, you needed three things: contingency plans, knowledge, and an understanding that the job wasn't likely to be over just because Mr. Johnson had the goods.

INTRODUCTION

Maybe you had a mother who told you that you were special. Who said there was no one like you, you were wonderful in your uniqueness, blah blah blah. Or maybe you had a mother you regularly reminded you that you were nothing more than a mouthy drain on her finances, an inconvenience at best and a pain in the ass at worst, and if you somehow managed to wind up as nothing in this life it's because you managed to take a step up from whatever nightmare destiny your horrid, wilted personality was suited for.

The thing is, no matter what your mama told you, she ain't with you on the streets. (At least I hope not. Dragging your moms around on runs with you is embarrassing.) Good or bad, whatever she told you about yourself doesn't matter. In the shadows, you're going to make yourself whatever you want to be. You hope to hell you've got some basic skills to carry you forward—but to take advantage of those skills, you need a full set of tools to make yourself into the street legend you were destined to be.

What we have here are the tools. It starts with *Who You Are and How You Got Here*, looking at the various ways people slide into the shadows and how that shapes them. You're going to meet each type of runner in your career, and the sooner you understand how they work, the better. This is also the kind of info that helps you understand yourself better—where you been, and where you gotta go.

Ethics, Codes, and Other Jokes strolls through the wacky world of runners who think there may be something to the job besides collecting the next paycheck. Maybe their dedication to outdated ideals is pathetic, maybe it's noble, but there's a good chance that one way or another, one of these codes will affect your life, so you better know what's up.

Then we take a deeper look at the Sixth World around us. *The Spice of Runners' Lives* scans the wide variety of jobs we can take to keep ourselves amused, while *More than Skin Deep* looks at the cultures and countercultures of many of the world's metatypes, the better to anticipate some tendencies you're going to encounter.

Construction Kits offers different approaches to making you, well, you. Use them to build yourself to be the shadowrunner you were born to be. Then *The Mess of Metahumanity* talks about the full range of metahumans you may encounter on the mean streets and gives you what you need in case you happen to be one of these freaks. No offense.

A few archetypes give a hint about the wide variety of professionals you can find in the shadows, and then things take a turn to the dark side with *Into the Night*, a look at the ghouls, vampires, and other Infected that make those really dark Barrens alleys so interesting. *As You as You Can Be* outlines the qualities that help make us all such a bunch of special snowflakes, and *Who You Know* details the people who grease the wheels of the shadows, helping you get gear, information, and other necessities. There's a whole barter economy with these guys, and the better you understand it, the more you can take advantage of it. And while we're on the subject of people to know, *Bosses and Betrayers* talks about the Mr. Johnsons that make our work possible, profitable, and dangerous, while offering tips on how to deal with them and survive to tell the tale.

But life isn't all work. *A Dump of One's Own* focuses on the glories of home, that special place where the likelihood of you being shot drops by sometimes as much as fifty percent. Take a look at the customization options it gives you to get the domicile you need without instantly hoovering up your next payday.

Then we've got *Pack Your Kit*. The megacorps of the world have filled up the shops and bazaars we frequent—or the ones we walk by, wishing we had scratch to spend—with lots of pretty, shiny things, and it's not always easy to figure out what you need. We've arranged a lot of gear into nice thematic packs, allowing you to easily make selections that will let you take care of business in the best way possible.

That's what's out there. So get moving, jump in, get stronger, tougher, and faster, and maybe you can prove that your mama was right all along.

Or wrong.

WHO YOU ARE & HOW YOU GOT HERE

POSTED BY: BULL

Ask a hundred shadowrunners how they got into the biz, and I guarantee you'll get a hundred answers. Maybe even more, since sometimes there's no easy response (and some people are just smartasses). If you ask a kid what she wants to be when she grows up, she might say "shadowrunner" in the same way she'd say "test pilot" or "trid star," but she doesn't really mean it. When you get down to it, not too many people start out wanting to be shadowrunners. Despite how the profession is glamorized in the media, it's a dirty, dangerous job, full of risks and backstabs and almost guaranteed to get you a nice cozy little hole in the ground before you're old enough to have grandkids.

- Present admins excepted. One of them, anyway.
- Slamm-0!

- Hush, you.
- Bull

But there are a lot of us out there, and we all had to come from somewhere. How did that bright-eyed kid end up dodging bullets, slinging spells, or breaking into places where the best you can hope for if they catch you is that they'll just kill you?

And while we're on the subject: You know those hundred runners with a hundred different stories? They've also got a hundred different personalities. A hundred quirks, annoying habits, prejudices, and traits that their teams are going to have to put up with if they want to get anything done. Who hasn't been on a run with That Guy—you know, the one who likes to eat limburger-and-onion sandwiches an hour before a run, or the one who obsessively pops his cyberspur every five seconds? Or the chica who won't shut up about her pet whackdoodle cause? Face it: You're going to be spending a lot of time in close proximity to these people while you're doing biz, so it's in your best interest to figure out how to overlook some things and learn to play nice together. Because killing them is unprofessional. Usually.

- Usually's right. I did a run one time with an ork who could clear a room with his ... uh ... emissions. He thought it was a riot. The rest of the team were ready to cack him by the time we got done. I don't think any court would have convicted us.
- Turbo Bunny

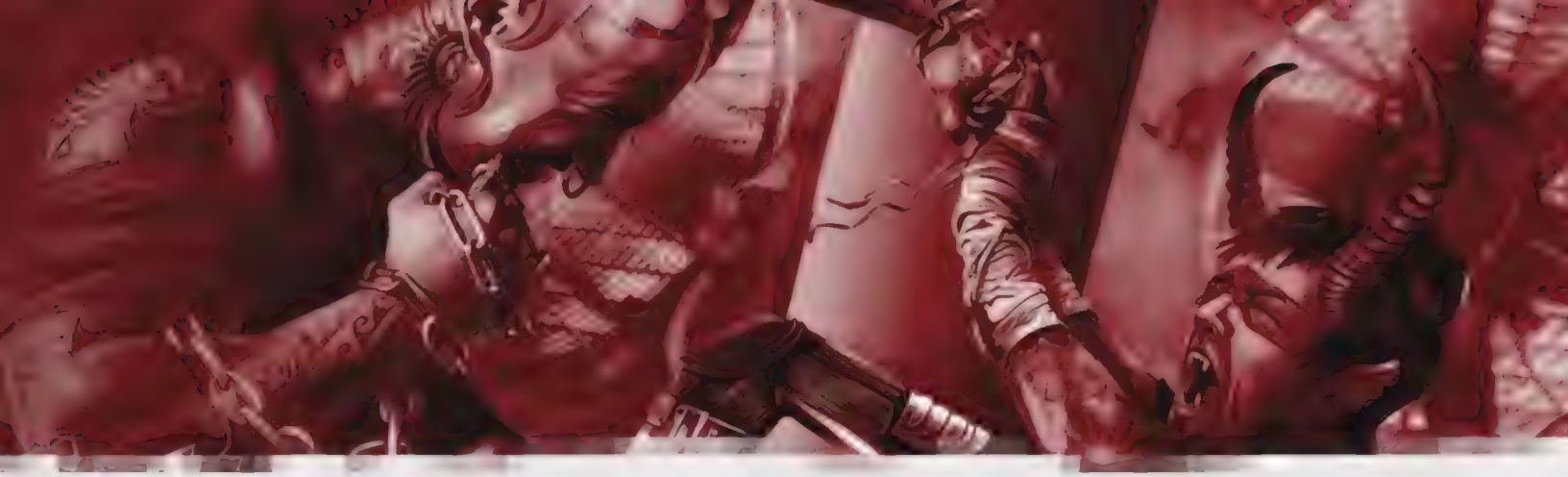
WHERE YOU CAME FROM

There are a thousand ways to fall into the shadows. Sometimes that fall involves a lot of screaming and smashing into things on the way to the bottom, and sometimes it's more like (as the author of one of my favorite old dead-tree books once said) "sauntering vaguely downward." But whatever way somebody does it, it almost always means some pretty significant life changes. Let's take a look at a few of the ways you might join the Lifestyles of the (not-so) Rich and Shadowy.

THE CORPS: OUTWARD MOBILITY

News flash: Not everybody who works for the corps is happy with their lot in life. Sure, there's something to be said for having a cushy job (or at least a job—the life of a wageslave isn't always cushy), not having to worry about where your next meal is coming from, and having a doss that doesn't regularly get ventilated by crossfire. I'm not sure what that something *is*, exactly, but that's what they tell me. A lot of people like that lifestyle and even aspire to it, hard as it is for us to comprehend. But there's always going to be those people who poke their heads up and twig to the fact that corp life has a price—namely, your freedom. Corps, especially the big ones, keep close tabs on their assets. That's all you are to them: an asset. You live on company property, shop at the company store, eat the company food, and toe the company line. And if you don't—let's just say that the megas didn't get rich by being forgiving.

The shadows get some of their best talent from these corporate misfits. They come in several flavors: the ex-company man who either had enough of the party line and decided to go it alone or who made some spectacular frag-up and got out one step ahead of liquidation with



extreme prejudice; the bodyguard who let her charge get cacked (either due to negligence or on purpose); the chica who finally got a good look at what her precious corp was doing and had an attack of conscience; the hotshot mage or decker who got sick of dancing on a corporate string and realized their talents would command more nuyen on the open market; and plenty others.

- One of the best faces I ever worked with used to be a high-level administrative assistant. Anybody who knows anything about corp life knows that if you're an executive, you do not want to piss off your admin—those girls and boys know everything about everybody, and they can frag you over six ways from Sunday if you don't treat them right. She finally had enough of the life and jumped ship for the shadows—while managing to bring her pig of a boss down when she ratted out his creative accounting to the higher-ups. Last I heard she was working as a freelance fixer.
- Kia

- Corps get particularly nervous when high-value assets like mages, executives, and researchers fly the coop, because they know things that can hurt the bottom line if it gets out. Naturally they won't spend the kind of effort going after Joe Sarariman that they would trying to get their hands on the lead scientist of a secret project, but don't ever think you're completely safe.
- Mr. Bonds

THE STREETS: OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Unlike corp life, street life doesn't usually have much going for it. Life in the trenches of the Sixth World's sprawls is often quite medieval—meaning nasty, brutish, and short.

- Rather like Chainmaker.
- Winterhawk

- Say that to my face—I dare you.
- Chainmaker

The point is, most people on the streets are looking for a way *off* the streets, and shadowrunning can be one of the best ways to get there. Our ranks are full of former street kids who got their start running errands for the local syndicate, ex-gangers who seized an opportunity when it showed up on their doorstep, and criminal types (both organized and freelance) who got a chance to break out of one dangerous world and jump right into another.

- This is why you don't usually see a lot of higher-up members of the criminal syndicates running the shadows. For one thing, they pull in a lot more cred doing what they're doing, and for another, once you get to a certain level, you don't tend to survive long if you go freelance.
- Lei Kung

- You left out one of the most reliable sources of runners from the streets: metahumans, especially orks and trolls. If you're an elf or a dwarf, you've got a decent shot at the nice things in life, but try getting a cushy corp job if you're three meters tall and look like a walking crime scene. Funny, but every job that isn't on the "expendable cannon fodder" career track miraculously seems to be filled when one of us puts in an application. In the shadows, sometimes we actually get to show that there's more to us than being big and tough.
- 2XL

- When most people think of runners who got their start on the streets, their minds go first to the expected stuff like the street kids, gangers, and low-level criminal scum. Dig a little deeper and you find all kinds of others who are a lot more interesting. In just the last year I've run with an ex-prostitute, a former bunraku puppet, a ghoul street surgeon (yeah, I wouldn't do it again, but I didn't have a lot of choice at the time), and a small-time gambler who got on the wrong side of the Triads. Shadowrunning makes for some really strange bedfellows sometimes.
- Rigger X

THE TALENTED: WHEN THE GOING GETS WEIRD

The shadows are a magnet for the odder end of society's spectrum, and by that I mean people like magicians, technomancers, and deckers. Sure, good Matrix jockeys and most spellslingers (good or not) can write their own tickets with the corps, stepping straight off the streets or out of the corp schools and into plush jobs where they're set for life.

They can, but a lot of them don't. Here's another news flash, kids: A lot of these people are fraggin' *strange*. Let's just say that for whatever reason, most of them don't fit nicely into the prefab holes. You can fit a square peg into a round hole if you file off the corners, but try doing that with a three-dimensional construct that doesn't even have a name. Then you'll begin to see the problem with integrating some of these guys into your happy little corporate conformity-fest. And strangeness aside, both magic and the Matrix tend to elevate the type of people who are—let's just say—*individuals*. When you'd rather claw out your own eyes than take orders from some mouth-breathing desk-hugger, giving up some security for the freedom to do what you want can get attractive in a hurry.

- Not everyone who runs the shadows does it because they have no other choice. I made a conscious decision many years ago to step away from the constraints of corporate and academic life for a while in order to have more freedom to pursue my own path. Trust me—corporate magical programs don't look kindly on maverick experimentation, regardless of how interesting its results might be. I've learned more about real-world magical phenomena in the shadows than I ever did at University.
- Winterhawk

- If you're a decker and you're good enough, it doesn't necessarily even have to be a choice. I knew a guy once who was bringing in high six figures in a corp gig, while simultaneously maintaining three separate personas as shadowrunning deckers. Yeah, you heard me right. Nobody in the shadows ever saw him in person. The only reason he's not still running is he got sloppy and accidentally took a job against his own corp.
- Glitch

- And of course, if you're like me the corps don't want you anyway, except as experimental subjects. So we don't exactly get a choice even if we wanted it.
- Netcat

HOODERS AND ACTIVISTS: BUILDING COMMUNITIES (ONE BOMB AT A TIME)

Some people just get mad as hell and don't want to take it anymore. They look at the drekker we live in and all they see is the fact that a small group of people pull the strings from what might as well be Mars for all the chance that they'll ever get near them, while everybody else is down here in the mud getting screwed. Whatever their cause—metahuman rights, neo-anarchism, religious freedom, rights for technomancers, or even something more personal like making their own little corner of the sprawl safer—activist runners combine their shadowrunning with a side order of social conscience. They're not in it for money or personal gain, but because they genuinely believe that they have a shot at making the world a slightly better place.

- This sounds idealistic, but don't be fooled: Not all hooders are goody-two-shoes with flowers in their hair. One man's hooder is another man's terrorist. It's all about perspective. Blowing up an apartment building because it's owned by an anti-meta policlub might be all well and good, but tell that to the families of the residents who've lost all their stuff and now have no place to live.
- Hannibelle

- You have to be careful when you work with activists or other runners who are in it for a cause. Most runners are essentially mercs, meaning they work for whoever's paying them. The good ones learn that you don't bite the hand that feeds you unless the circumstances change (yeah, I know, that only happens on days with 'y' in them, but you get the idea). They also understand the value of compromise, and you can reason with them when somebody switches the playlist. The more idealistic end of the activist crowd *believe*, and there aren't many more dangerous things than a true believer on a mission. It's hard to work with somebody who won't see anybody's viewpoint but their own.
- Snopes

- You don't compromise when you're right.
- Ecotope

ACADEMICS: THINGS METAHUMANITY REALLY NEEDS TO KNOW

Sometimes curiosity can take you to some pretty strange places, especially when you're chasing answers that you won't find in your typical ivory-covered halls. Most academic types are content to do safe, properly sanctioned research, but there's always a subset who realize that when you're willing to do things that aren't strictly legal—or safe—you can get a lot more interesting results.

I don't talk about my daughter much, but I'll just say that some academics get in over their heads and could use some protection before something terrible happens.

- We saw a lot of this right around the time Dunkelzahn's will came out. Runner teams made good money shepherding botanists and biologists around places like Amazonia looking for rare flora and fauna. Anywhere you find interesting phenomena that aren't easy to get to, you'll find adventurous academics looking to find a way to get there. Some of them decide the rush is worth the danger and stay in the shadows.
- Glasswalker

- If you want the answers to the big questions, you have to do what it takes to get them.
- Elijah

MILITARY AND LAVV ENFORCEMENT: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE VVALL

There's a lot less difference than you think between the people who uphold society's rules and the ones who break them. Some reasons I've heard for law-enforcement officers and military types going over the wall and into the shadows include frustration with the rampant corruption within the ranks, simple temptation, or feelings of futility (it's hard to keep your idealism when so many times the bad guys *do* get away with it, or worse yet, get off due to backroom deals way above your pay grade). When you're a beat cop or a military grunt earning crap wages, the lure of the cred you can make in the shadows is hard to ignore. Combine that with the fact that the skills you've learned on the job—things like weapon use, close combat, and keeping your head when the lead and the mojo are flying—make the transition easier than it would be for, say, your typical corp drone, and the prospect starts to get really attractive.

- This is where a lot of the independent merc outfits get their recruits. Maybe your life isn't as predictable as it is within a military or paramilitary structure, but it's usually a hell of a lot more interesting. And potentially more lucrative.
- Picador

- I once knew an ex-Lone Star detective who spent the better part of two years running an operation to take down a particular runner team. Then he pissed off the wrong higher-up and found himself framed for a high-profile murder. He got out just ahead of the axe and ended up hooking up with the same runner team he'd been trying to catch.
- DangerSensei

THE UNCLASSIFIABLE

Then there are the odd ones out. The shadows are full of them—people who fell into the life from completely unexpected places. Give me a little time to think and I can probably name you at least fifty different shadowrunner origin stories that didn't come from any of the categories I already mentioned. Everything from the nine-year-old decker to the little old lady with the lucrative business smuggling rare drugs in batches of chocolate chip cookies to a top-level UCAS politician (no, I'm not going to tell you who, so don't ask) who moonlit as a highly paid wetwork specialist.

- I once worked with a runner who used to be a plumber, of all things. I also had a fixer for a while who started out as a high-end art dealer. The longer I've been in the shadows, the more I realize that with the right motivation, anybody could end up on the wrong side of the law.
- Axis Mundi

- One type you can't forget about because there are plenty of them out there: the adrenaline junkie. These boys and girls run the shadows for the sheer thrill, and a lot of them are batshit crazy. If you ever find yourself on a team with one, my advice is to get out as soon as you can. They might be good at what they do, and they might get the job done, but you can't count on them to do what you expect. Being on a team with a guy who likes to take on entire roomfuls of armed opposition is never healthy if you plan to be an old shadowrunner someday.
- 2XL

- Same idea, though a bit more hit-and-miss as far as reliability goes: addicts. Doesn't matter what it is—drugs, BTL, alcohol, gambling—a runner with a monkey on his back always carries the risk that he's going to make a bad decision at the worst possible time. They might show up to the job high or drunk, or they might end up owing money to the wrong people and selling you out for the price of a fix. Sure, maybe they'll be fine for a long time, managing their addictions and not letting them get in the way of biz. But as we all know it only takes one time. What we do is dangerous enough without leaving your continued existence at the mercy of somebody's addiction.
- Nephrine

I'M A REAL BOY NOW

Let's face it: It really *does* take all kinds, and the shadows are no exception. Sure, there are plenty of runners who are consummate professionals, doing their job without bringing pesky things like personality into the operation. They do what they need to do, hit all their marks, and when they go on their way, you barely remember them. This isn't a bad thing in the shadows, of course. When you're picking qualities you want in teammates, "competence" ranks about a thousand times higher than "charmingly quirky." But the fact is, there are quite a few folks in our biz who suffer from, as it was once called in a pretty wiz old flatscreen movie, "a deplorable excess of personality." So go ahead. I'm gonna open it up now. Tell us about some of the more memorable runners you've worked with. Entertain us.

- For a while I ran with a sam who was addicted to really horrible puns. We couldn't even get through the meet with a Johnson without him dropping three or four groaners. We all wanted to kill him, and we would have if he hadn't been so damned good at his job.
- Hard Exit

- When I was in DeeCee, I knew a rigger who was so picky about his van that he wouldn't even let you inside it unless you wiped your feet first. No food or drink, no smoking, nothing. The one time we came tearing out of a run site covered head to toe in mud and slime, I thought he was gonna cry.
- Pistons

- One guy I knew wouldn't hurt a woman. It didn't matter if she was a corp princess type or a three-meter troll waving an HMG in his face. If there was a female, he couldn't hurt her. Nice ideals, but it didn't work out too well for him. He got blown away by a female sec-guard when he refused to fire on her.
- Thorn

- Couple of years ago my team was hired to extract a particular researcher from a particular South American corporation. Everything went great—except that the researcher developed a raging love-at-first-sight crush on our mage. Which would have been bad enough even if the mage hadn't decided that the feeling was mutual. We had to put up with the two of them all over each other the whole trip back.
- Turbo Bunny

- I used to know a germophobic shaman. Seriously, this guy wore a rebreather mask, gloves, the whole bit, and used the Sterilize spell like they were paying him by the casting. He ended up having to leave the team after one of our runs took us into the Chicago sewers. Thought the poor guy's head would explode when he tripped and went face-first into the drek. He was never quite the same again.
- Sounder

LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH

We've all been there, especially back when we just started out in the shadows: Unless you've got the luxury of running with a regular team that you trust, sometimes you have to dance with somebody you don't know, don't see eye to eye with, or downright can't stand. Maybe your fixer or your latest Mr. Johnson has put together a team with experts on whatever you have to do to get the job done. Maybe you lost one of your chummers and had to replace them with a new guy. Or maybe you just run with a bunch of clowns who get the job done but who rub you like cat claws on a blackboard. It's all about the job and getting it done.

Whatever the reason might be, there'll be times when you have to deal with people you don't like. So everybody pull up your chairs, put on your tiaras, and get ready for your first lesson from Uncle Bull's Charm School for Shadowrunners and Other Lowlifes.

I'LL WORK WITH YOU, BUT I DON'T LIKE YOU

First thing to remember, always: You're a professional. That's what separates the real runners from the wannabes. If you've got any hopes of making a career out of this and getting the good gigs, you need to be somebody that Mr. Johnson wants to hire. For any of you who've actually had real jobs, you know there's always that one person you don't like. Maybe it's mild, or maybe they piss you off for just existing. But either way, you still have to work with them. Your team doesn't have to become your best friends, but they do have to know you've got their backs and won't flake out on them just because they bug you.

- Sometimes that can be harder than others, especially with unfamiliar teams. Ass-deep in some secret corporate lab is a lousy time to find out that your shiny new sammy buddy will cut and run at the first sign of trouble.
- 2XL

WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

Running's dangerous biz. Show me a runner who hasn't been double-crossed at least once and I'll show you a liar, or a newbie in his first rodeo. After a time, if you live long enough, you start developing a kind of sixth sense for when the job's going to go south on you, and you react accordingly to make sure your ass stays as alligator-free as possible.

The thing is, though, it's not always Mr. Johnson doing the screwing. Sometimes it's your own team members. A team you can trust is worth its weight in gold, but it's not something that just happens. If you're smart, you'll assume that every member of your team has his or her own private agenda in addition to whatever the run is. Your job when evaluating potential team members is to decide whose agendas you can deal with, and whose you can't. If you stay alive long enough and have a little luck, you might just end up with a few chummers you can trust.

- Until the situation changes and they get into debt, or somebody makes them an offer they can't refuse. Trust is for suckers. Smart runners know that anybody who hasn't tried to screw them over just hasn't been presented with the right opportunity yet.
- Haze

- Drek, that's cynical even for *me*. And that's saying something.
- Snopes

- It's not rocket science, people. It's all about observation, being smart, and paying attention to what's going on around you—you know, all the things that keep you alive as a shadowrunner in the first place? Unless you're completely socially oblivious, it's not that difficult to keep an eye on your teammates (and not just the new ones, either; like Haze said, situations change all the time, and the guy you thought was your best chummer can turn on you in a heartbeat given the right inducements). Watch them for odd behavior, unexplained absences, and just a general sense of "something ain't right." And above all, trust your gut. If you think something's wrong, check it out. Sure, you might look like an ass if it turns out you were wrong, but looking like an ass is better than being dead if it turns out you were *right* and you *didn't* check. I can guarantee that if your chummer is any good at the biz, she's checking up on you too.
- Kay St. Irregular

GAME INFORMATION

Some *Shadowrun* gamemasters, when setting up their campaigns, like to have all the players collaborate and come up with a team that fits well together, shares a history, and has a reason for being together. This can produce some great teams, and undoubtedly makes it easier for the gamemaster to come up with suitable runs for them. If everybody on the team, for example, is a former Sioux Wildcat on the run because their unit is being framed for a superior officer's screwup, then adventure ideas immediately suggest themselves.

However, players being what they are, they usually have their own ideas about what kind of shadowrunners they want to play, and they won't necessarily be a perfect match for the rest of the team. This method makes it harder to integrate the group initially, but as long as nobody goes *too* far overboard, it can also produce a lot of unexpected fun as the various backgrounds, personalities, and motivations get tossed in a blender and have to learn to work together. After all, the world around them is trying to kill them—life will get a lot rougher for them if they're trying to kill each other, too.

Naturally, gamemasters will want to concern themselves with getting a balanced team, abilities-wise. While it's certainly possible to have an enjoyable game with a team consisting of two mages, three riggers, and a face, it's usually a good idea to nudge players in the direction of making sure their characters' abilities are diverse enough that they can handle most challenges and won't feel like they're stepping on each other's toes.

That isn't what this section is about, though. *Shadowrun* is a roleplaying game, and if both gamemasters and players make an effort to flesh out the team, it will almost certainly result in a game that's more fun and memorable for everybody. For more tips on working with your players and designing a game that everyone will enjoy, see p. 332, *SR5*.

BACKGROUNDS AND MOTIVATIONS: WHAT MAKES JOHNNY RUN?

Shadowrunners come from every background and all walks of life. For every dirt-poor street kid who joined a gang and started doing low-level errands for the local Triad, there's a high-level ex-corper or military professional who stepped out (or was forced out) of a lucrative career for some personal reason. Some are criminals, while others fell into the shadowrunning life because they were running away from something. Some run for the thrill (deckers are often this type, eager to pit their skills and their hardware against the best of the best), some for the money, and some because

PINK MOHAWK VS. BLACK TRENCHCOAT

You might have heard these terms tossed around among *Shadowrun* players: "Oh, I miss the old Pink Mohawk–style of the 2050s!" or "Her game is a lot of fun but sometimes it gets a little too Black Trenchcoat for me." But what do they mean, and what do they have to do with your game?

Simply put, they're two different playstyles. In other games they might be called "cinematic" and "realistic," or "four-color" and "grim 'n' gritty." Pink Mohawk-style games emphasize style over realism, allowing for things like big, bombastic battles where the lead flies thick in the air and with the right dice rolls runners can perform actions that might not be technically possible in the real world (or even the reality of the *Shadowrun* world). Characters tend to be long on style, make a lot of wisecracks during combat, and take a lot more risks because they know that the heroes (almost) always survive in the end, even if they don't win. The name comes from the art style prevalent in the earliest editions of the game, where many of the archetypical characters had a "bigger" but less realistic style than more modern characters. In the game world, the change could easily be chalked up to fundamental shifts in society: things were different in 2050 than they are in 2075, just as they changed from the 1960s to the 2010s.

Black Trenchcoat games focus more on gritty realism. Bullets and magic are much more deadly, the world is less forgiving of mistakes, and teams tend to spend a lot more time planning their runs and carefully infiltrating their targets instead of busting in with guns blazing. You're much more likely to see intrigue, backstabbing, and double-crossing in a Black Trenchcoat game; player characters are suspicious and bestow their trust rarely, and even their own teammates might be pursuing agendas that put them at odds with each other. Black Trenchcoat games might also get into some of the darker aspects of the world, like torture, extreme violence, and sexual themes.

So which one is better? There's no right answer for that. *Shadowrun* works equally well in either style (or some combination of the two); it's just a matter of the gamemaster getting together with the players to figure out which style everybody wants to go with. Campaigns can run the gamut from a completely unrealistic, high-cinema world where the PCs take on armies singlehandedly and come out on top, to settings so dark and grim that everybody knows to have a spare character on hand for when the existing one is inevitably killed in some gruesome way. Both can be fun, and both can be satisfying, as long as everybody agrees on the boundaries and knows what to expect.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

Longtime Shadowrun players might remember a series of questions that appeared in the character-creation section of earlier editions of the game. Many players found these questions to be helpful in fleshing out their characters, so we're reprinting them here (with a few updates to make them fresh). As the gamemaster, feel free to add your own questions that are specific to your campaign.

1. **What is the character's gender?** Standard male or female? Transgender? Indeterminate? How do they present to the world? A lot of the issues around gender have been dealt with by the 2070s, but individuals still have opinions and prejudices—and their own ways of expressing themselves.
2. **What is the character's physical size?** Is he pretty standard for his gender and metatype, or is he a tall, skinny dwarf or short for a troll?
3. **What is the color of the character's hair, eyes, and skin?** Is her coloring particularly striking, or so average that she blends easily into crowds? Remember, with cyberware, surgery, and cosmetics, your character can have just about any coloring you want her to have. Remember too that most racism in the Shadowrun world is centered around metatype rather than ethnicity.
4. **What is the character's general appearance?** First impressions matter. Is your character a slob or neatly dressed? Does she slouch? Does she like to make a splash when she enters a room? Is she drop-dead gorgeous, butt-ugly, or somewhere in between?
5. **Where was the character born?** Was he raised a rich corp brat, or did he grow up as an orphan on the streets fighting for every meal? Was his childhood spent in a megasprawl or in a more natural setting like the NAN lands or Tir Tairngire?
6. **What is the character's age?** A very young character will have a different perspective on the world than an older one; likewise, an ork with a short lifespan will see things differently than an elf with a very long one. What important Sixth World events does your character remember? Was she involved in any of them?
7. **What was the character's family like?** A character's childhood shapes who he is today. Did he have siblings? If so, does he keep in touch with them? Did he know his parents? Did he grow up in a large, close-knit group, or was he an orphan with no one he could trust to look out for him? Does he have any dark family secrets?
8. **Has the character begun her own family?** Is she married or partnered? Separated? Widowed? Does she have children? If your character is male, does he have children he doesn't know about? (Even if you don't think so, your gamemaster might think otherwise!)
9. **Where or how was the character educated?** Did she get her education from the School of Hard Knocks? Does she have an advanced degree from a respected university? Was she raised in the corporate educational system, or did she learn her skills from a mentor?
10. **Has the character done anything else for a living?** What did he do before he ran the shadows? Was he a professional, a student, a ganger, a corporate cog, or something more exotic? Why did he give it up to become a shadowrunner?
11. **What are the character's political and religious beliefs?** The two big things you never want to discuss at a friendly gathering are politics and religion. Does your character have strong political beliefs, or any at all? Is she religious? Atheist? Anti-religion? How important are these beliefs to defining the character?
12. **What is the character's moral code?** Does the character refuse to kill? Does he have any kind of sexual ethics? Does his morality have a large bearing on his actions, or is he an amoral hedonist whose actions change depending on the situation? What (if anything) might compel him to break one of his moral strictures?
13. **Does the character have any goals?** Everybody wants something. Does your character want money? Fame? That big score that will allow her to retire to anonymity? Security for her friends and family? Revenge? What kind of effort is she willing to make to achieve these goals?
14. **Why does the character run the shadows?** Is he doing it because he wants to, or was he forced into it? Does he do it for the thrill, the money, or because he hates the powers that be and wants to do his small part to bring them down? What would make him stop running the shadows?
15. **What is the character's personality?** Is she an introvert or an extrovert? Is she funny, grumpy, flirtatious, or just plain weird? Does she have social skills, or is she uncomfortable relating to others? Is she opinionated, easygoing, or downright apathetic? How do others tend to see her?
16. **What special qualities does the character possess?** Not every quality is directly related to shadowrunning. Can he draw well? Does he have perfect pitch? Is he a really good organizer? Does he have a knack with animals?
17. **Are there certain things the character just cannot do?** What are her limitations? Is she terrible with money? Is she incapable of harming children? Does she have a crippling fear of heights, or find it nearly impossible to form close relationships?
18. **What does the character hate?** Elves? Religious people? Corporations? Personality surveys? Himself?
19. **What does the character love?** This could be a person (like a lover or family member); an ideal (justice, freedom, metahuman rights); an item (her favorite gun); a location; or even herself.
20. **What is the character's name?** Names have power in the Sixth World. What was his birth name? Does he like/use it, or does he prefer to go by a street name? If he has a nickname or street name, did he pick it or was it bestowed on him by associates?

they have no other choice: It's either run the shadows or end up ground under the uncaring wheels of a society that has no other place for them.

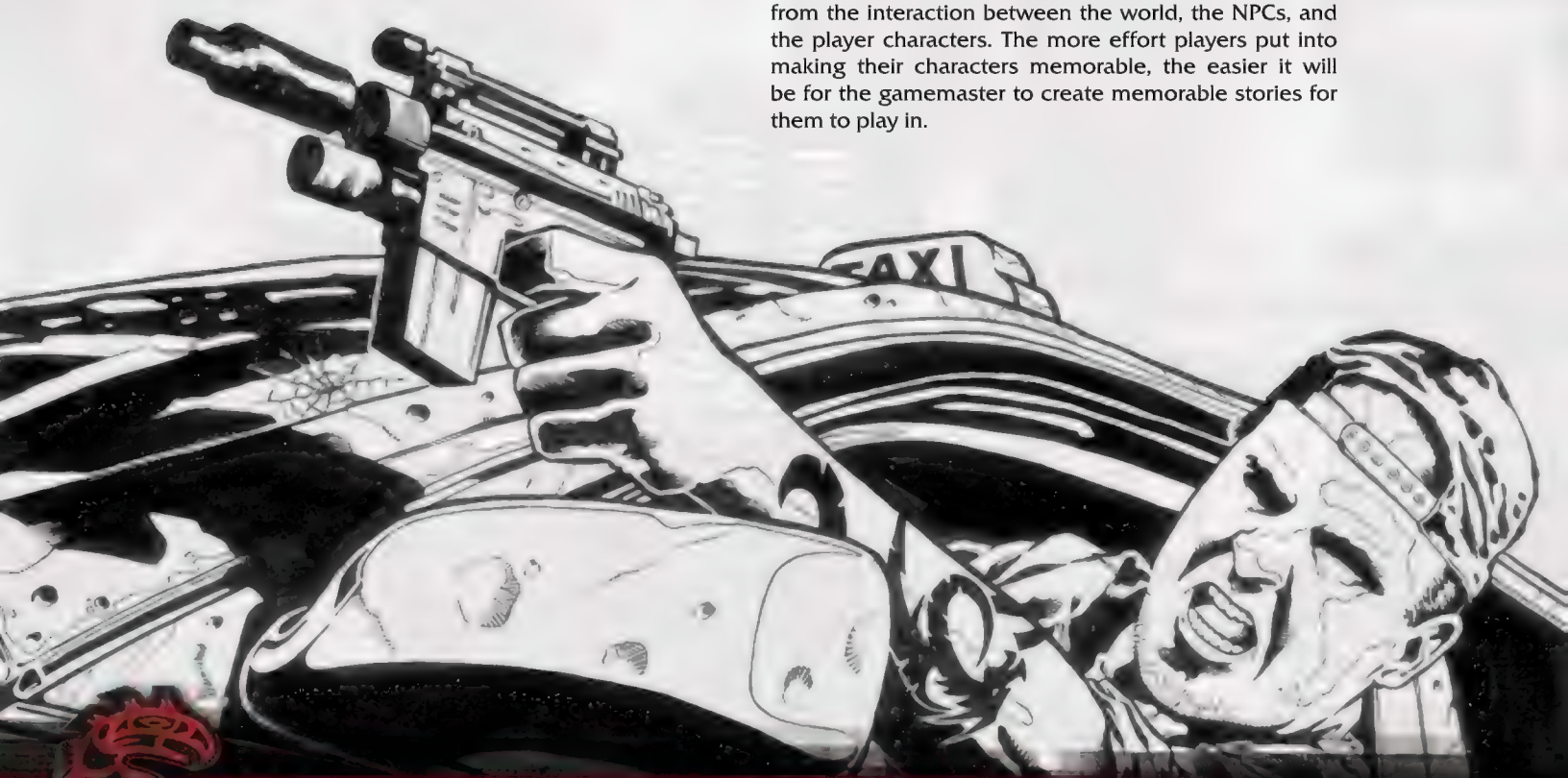
When your players are creating their characters, it's usually good to give them an idea of the sort of campaign you're planning to run, or discuss it with them and collaboratively decide. It's no fun to spend hours designing the perfect corporate-intrigue chameleon, only to find out that the game will be ninety percent hack-and-slash and ten percent roleplaying (or, conversely, to create an ork combat monster for a campaign that's primarily focused on Tír Tairngire politics).

MAKING 'REAL' RUNNERS: BEYOND THE AK-97

If you've played tabletop RPGs for any length of time at all, you've played with at least one of these: the guy or girl with no imagination. You know, the dude who, when asked to describe his character, answers, "He has an AK-97." Or the girl who files the serial numbers off the latest hotshot urban-fantasy heroine and wants you to make up her vampire boyfriend as an NPC. There's nothing wrong with any of this if it's the way your group likes to play. We here at Stately *Shadowrun* HQ (there really is one—ask for a tour sometime, but trust me: stay away from that locked green door) aren't trying to tell you how to play your game. But if you and your players want a little extra something to make your characters shine, you need to think about what makes them individuals.

Think of the main character in your favorite book or movie or TV show. Is she perfect? Sure, she might be the biggest badass who ever walked the earth, but what makes her unique? What makes her stand out, and makes you want to root for her? Perfect characters who never struggle with anything are boring. But if you take your badass combat monster and give him a soft spot for puppies, a fear of spiders, or a compulsion to track down the perfect pepperoni pizza in any new town the team visits, suddenly he starts to come alive. Maybe your ace spellslinging shaman has an elderly mother who's constantly calling her at inopportune times, or she's harboring a secret crush on the team's sam, or she really likes old-style Scandinavian death metal and doesn't care that it makes the rest of the team's ears bleed. When you and your group sit down in six months to tell war stories about your best runs, what are you going to remember? The AK-97, or that time the team's elf technomancer nearly got the whole group killed because he *had* to chat with the charming AI he found in the target's Matrix system?

Not saying anything new here: *Shadowrun* is a cooperative game. At the core, it's the players' job to come up with a group of characters to experience the world, and it's the gamemaster's job to be the world they experience. Some groups like it when the gamemaster micromanages every aspect of the run, with the players following clues to get them from point A to point B until the train finally thunders into the climax and coasts to a stop at the Karma awards. Other groups are more freeform, with the players and the gamemaster collaboratively building the world as they go, letting the story flow in whatever direction it seems to be heading. While the gamemaster may be the ultimate authority on what happens in the world, the best games grow organically from the interaction between the world, the NPCs, and the player characters. The more effort players put into making their characters memorable, the easier it will be for the gamemaster to create memorable stories for them to play in.



GRUDGES AND RIVALRIES

Something that can make a campaign deeper is keeping an eye out for any potential friction between the PCs and other people—whether they be NPCs or other PCs. Those tensions don't need to be acted on immediately or made the focus of the campaign—sometimes it's better to let them simmer. The players may be lulled into complacency, only to have a rival spring a trap on them at an unexpected moment. Suppose, for example, that a team finishes a hard-fought run where they come up against a ruthless security chief at a secret corporate installation. Maybe one of them wounds him, or maybe he's simply pissed because the PCs managed to best him. Either way, he's going to remember them. Just like PCs evolve throughout a campaign, so do important NPCs (or at least they should). If the security chief is particularly vindictive, he might look for ways to make the PCs' lives more difficult—especially after he's gotten a couple of promotions under his belt and has accessed more resources. Your players might not even remember him … but he remembers them.

Then there are the rivalries between PCs. These can't be forced—they have to grow naturally from the personalities of the individual characters, and it's a beautiful thing when they do. But if one does begin to form—for example, if the gamemaster notices that the team's decker is becoming increasingly annoyed at the sam's insistence that no enemy is left alive, or the shaman and the mage begin a friendly rivalry to see who's better at magic, or two PCs become romantic rivals for the same NPC—that's an opportunity to step things up and build interesting storylines into the game. Ideally, these rivalries will give the chance for deeper character development—and more fun for all involved.

DEALING WITH LONE WOLVES

Literature, TV, and movies are full of "lone wolves," characters who are disagreeable, antisocial, and don't play well with others. They're the best at what they do, but they do it alone—usually because nobody else can stand to be around them. If they work with a team, they're either the leader (so nobody can give them orders) or they're the maverick who's always running off to do their own thing but always manages to come through and succeed in the end.

Groups may encounter players who want to play this kind of character, because—let's face it—they're *cool*. They can also fit in very well with the Shadowrun paradigm. The problem is that they're fun for the person playing them, but not so much for the other players in the group who have to put up with them. And <fill in your favorite deity> help you if you get a whole group of people wanting to play lone wolves! Ever watch a sheepdog's brain implode as he tries to herd a group of kittens? The gamemaster will end up envying that sheepdog.

Groups have several options for avoiding "lone wolf syndrome." The easiest one is to simply tell them, "Sorry, but your samurai who can't stand being around other people and insists on doing all his runs alone won't fit in with this game," then work with them to develop a concept that works better in a group context. Better, and less authoritarian, would be to appeal to your player's better nature and say, "Let's think about that for a minute. How are we going to work Hateboy in with the other team members if he freaks out and starts shooting whenever he gets near them?" If it comes down to it (and you aren't worried about having some tough game sessions), you can always just let him play the character and let nature take its course. He'll realize soon enough that playing Mr. "I Vant to be Alone" doesn't mean that he gets to hog all the screen time while the other players go off and watch TV, but rather that he spends a lot of time seething in his doss while the team goes out on the run. "Hey, we invited you along, chummer, but you can't stand being around us, so

ETHICS, CODES, & OTHER JOKES

Tommy Twoton dropped the guard with a heavy blow to the head, his troll muscles mocking the plastic helmet. "Last one's down."

Baker ran a cord from his cyberdeck, finally in position at the research terminal so that the wireless jamming was useless. As the system whirred to life, he caught motion heading toward a side door. "We got a runner!"

Smooth as silk, Ebony's Predator V lined up the shot, but a swat from Tommy pushed her aim down, putting a bullet into the floor tile instead of the scientist's spine. "You dumb trog!" she cried, her mouth carving a severe arc of sour disapproval.

As the lab coat vanished, Tommy said, "We don't kill people who aren't armed."

"We don't ... he's going to bring more security!"

Tommy shrugged. "We'll deal with them when they show. They fight back, they're fair game. But we don't kill civilians."

She shook her head, tucking her pistol away. "You're crazy."

"No, I'm a professional."

"Yeah, well, I'll hire a professional to put flowers on your grave later, moron."

"Just keep an eye on the door. You see people with guns, feel free to shoot, but don't fire at anybody else."

With a snarl, she stalked to the door, clicking her cybersenses on for a good sweep of the hall.

Baker shook his head. "Never got you, Tommy boy. Why so worried about some cog getting broke?"

Tommy shrugged. "Anybody can be a killer. All you need's a bullet. Professionals have standards. It's one thing to nail a guy in a gunfight, right? They know the risks. That guy was just doing his job, same as us. You get a rep for slaughter, you're useless for anything else. Keep the body count low, you can keep jobs rolling in."

Baker took a moment to look away from his AR feeds at that. "So it's business?"

Tommy shook his head. "More than that. You grow up a troll, you're surrounded by tissue paper everywhere you go. Everything you touch, you can break. Doors, people, plates, kittens ... you learn to be careful. I don't like to break things if I can help it."

Baker smirked. "And that's why I like working with you. Keep me safe while I go deep."

With that, the decker went limp, collapsing into the troll's big mitts. Twoton set him down as gently as anyone could. "Will do."

A CODE AND A CALLING

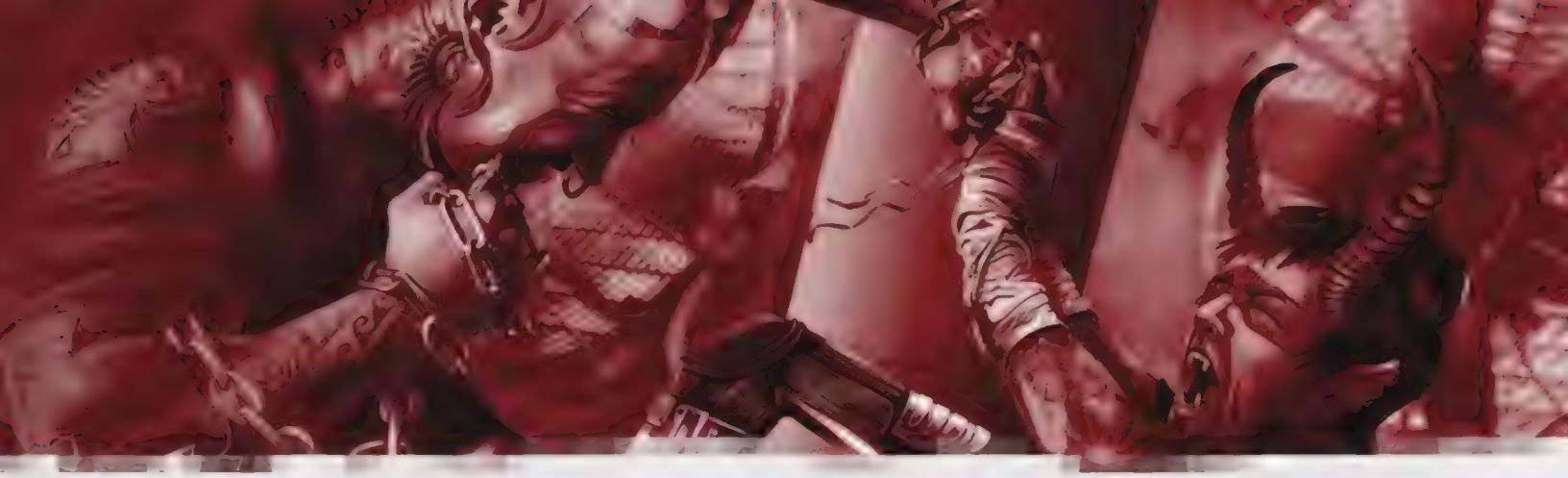
An honorable thief seems to be as contradictory as a poetic warrior, two things that are fine apart but when brought together cannot thrive. In truth, while many claim to hold to a code, when the chips are down they're willing to set it aside in the name of need. Those who truly follow a path of honor, who abide by a code even when it would make their life more difficult, or who are willing to face death before dishonor, are truly a rare breed. They are men and women of honor. They are a cut above the norm, seen by some as fools and by others as heroes, but by all as relics of a different age. When the words of the day are "I got mine," they all say "It is not enough." To them, the code is worth more than all the paydata in the world. Some follow the code out of honor, others because they know no other way, and some rare few cling to a code as the last gasp before falling into cyberpsychosis, the final vestige of humanity in a vast ocean of machine.

Below you will find some of the better-known codes, but this is only a sample. There are many, many more. All of these can be used in connection with the Code of Honor negative quality (p. 79, *SR5*).

THE PATH OF THE SAMURAI

Restriction: May not kill anyone from surprise or via treachery. May not break his word once given.

The best known of all the codes of honor, the Path of the Samurai has forked in two directions. The one that most shadowrunners are familiar with is properly called the **Path of the Ronin**, as most people who call themselves street samurai have turned their backs on the very



WORDS TO LIVE BY

"A disadvantage that isn't a disadvantage isn't worth any points." –Steve Long

These words are as true today as when Steve Long first wrote them for the *Champions* role-playing game. A character with the Code of Honor quality needs to have it tested every now and then to make it a true negative quality. If their code prevents them from harming a child, the gamemaster needs to remind them when children might be endangered by their actions. They don't need to stretch to make the point, but they should be sure the character is actively concerned about maintaining their personal code.

Conversely, here are some words to avoid:

"I don't harm women and children. That's why I brought Joe along."

While a code is a character's personal belief system, they can't just let someone else on their team perform actions that would violate the character's code. An ardent backer of spirit rights who refuses to bind a spirit to their will shouldn't simply stand by while their teammate throws chains around every spirit they meet. A samurai who follows his code should chide his friends when they are rude and never just look away when someone undertakes a dishonorable act on the grounds that "It's my code, not theirs."

A gamemaster should step in and assign penalties when they feel that someone is playing too fast and loose with their codes in order to avoid penalties. Characters who follow a code hold themselves above the norm. This doesn't mean that a player should hold to their code so much that the game becomes unplayable, but instead that everyone should enjoy the party interplay while letting the negative quality they chose push them into interesting, challenging dilemmas.

core belief of the true samurai, that of loyalty and service. Rather than follow the commands of their betters, they have cast themselves onto the waves (*ronin*, literally translated, is "wave man," describing one who is like unto a small boat cast adrift into the wild waves of the ocean with neither oar nor sail). While most street samurai pay lip service to some aspects of the code, those who embrace the entire code are seen as truly honorable souls by their peers, setting an example for others to follow.

- Hatchetman was one of the best. You can find some of his insights in the older files in the archives. I wish I got to hang with him more, but our circles were pretty far apart in the day. FastJack knew him better, but ...
- Bull

- All that so-called "honor" didn't do him a damn bit of good in the end. Dead's dead. Trust me on that one.
- Butch

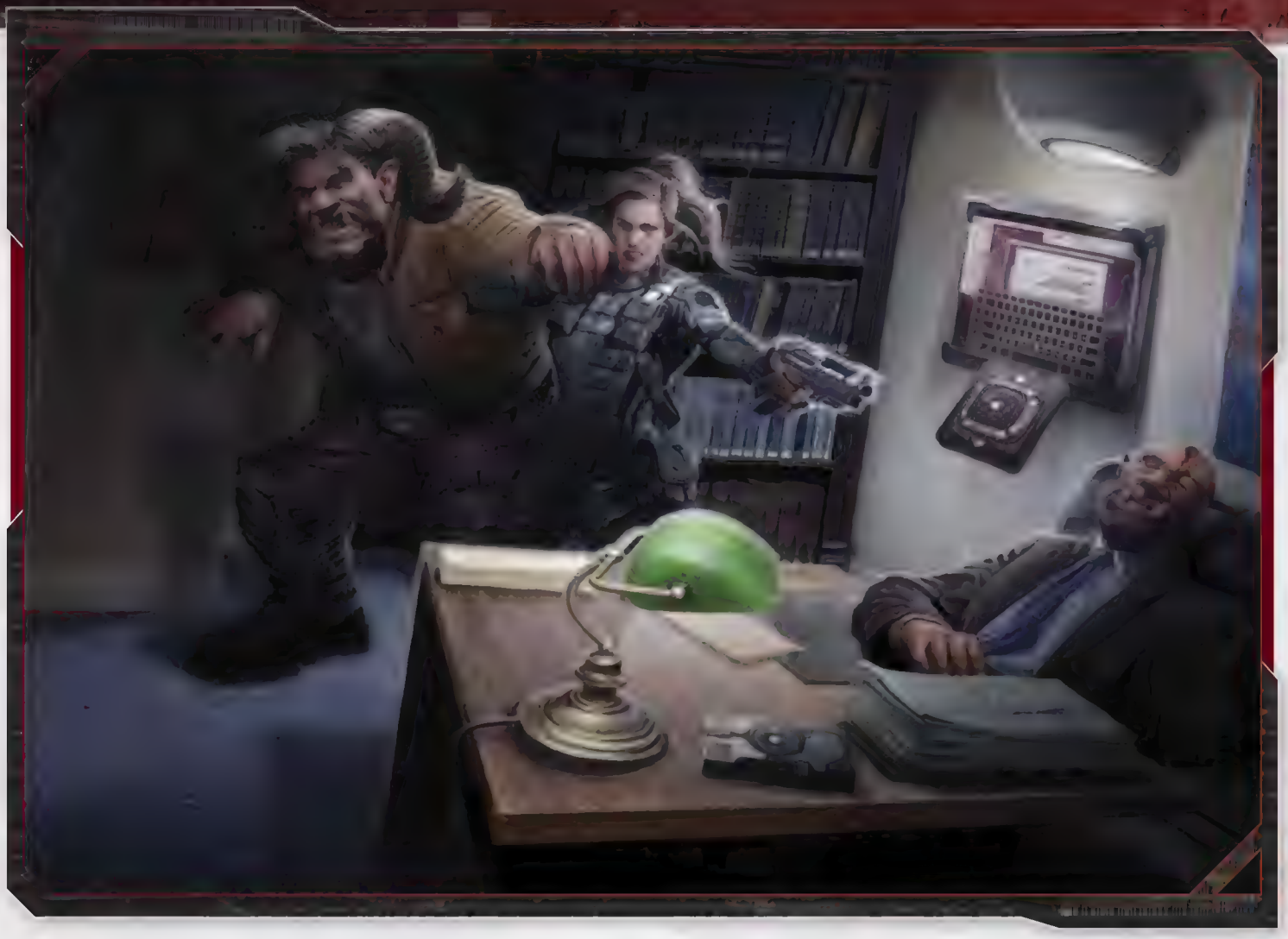
- Interesting fact: The first modern samurai was an American named Samuel Carter. He was on security detail during the food riots of 2005 and single-handedly held off some rioters with a sword when his gun jammed, and he ended up saving his boss. Shiawase brass ate it up and made him a media icon. By the end of the year, Bushido was back en vogue. Damn shame what happened to Sam.
- Icarus

- What happened to him?
- /dev/grrl

- The headline's free, but you have to pay for the body text.
- Icarus

The samurai code largely revolves around seven ideas, better called the Seven Virtues. These are:

Gi, or Righteousness. This belief is that the samurai is a divine agent, uniquely blessed with the speed and



skill to make a difference. Justice guides the samurai's hand, compelling the samurai to act against those who would hide behind a law or to punish those who would break one. The samurai must also remain pure under this tenet, bathing regularly, keeping his hair clean, and keeping his soul from being tainted by weaknesses of lust, wine, or drug.

Yuki, or Courage. The samurai fears no death, releasing him in battle to kill with no fear of reprisal, for he has already accepted his death. The samurai must never flee from a battle unless all others have left, nor may a samurai shirk his duty out of a sense of self-preservation. A samurai should also be confident in his abilities and be proud to show them when called upon by his master.

Jin, or Kindness. The samurai is no base animal. Killing is something anyone can do, but a samurai must be better than that, with the gentle heart of a poet. The samurai should never be harsh to his underlings nor should they be selfish in their desires. A reliance on material goods tempts the samurai to remain in the realm of the living, after all, while a frugal samurai shows that he is ready to die at any time. He should rely on as few worldly possessions as possible and give away what he does not need.

Rei, or Respect. All things have a place in the greater order, and the samurai should show proper respect to those above and those below. Knowing one's manners, showing common courtesy, and above all else, acting with proper social mores in any situation. Once again, anyone can be an uncouth barbarian, but a samurai is an artisan and scholar as well as a killer. If he cannot praise his lord in poetry or reflect him nobly in a painting, the samurai has poor Rei.

Makoto, or Honesty. The samurai is expected not only to say kind things, but also to mean them. In addition, the samurai should never undertake a deed that he does not believe in. If he should be so dishonest with himself, his hands will fail him, his blade will break, and he will know nothing but shame and disgrace. The samurai is further above base treachery in battle or underhanded tactics; those are for lesser men. The samurai doesn't have to give

up a tactical advantage, but he must never strike without first stating his name and intent.

Meiyo, or Honor. A samurai must never bring shame upon the emperor, his lord's house, his lord, his ancestors' names, or his own name, in that order. A samurai's word is bond and he must go to any length, including death, to ensure that he will uphold his end of the bargain. It is not easily given, but when it is, the word of a samurai is stronger than any steel.

Chugi, or Loyalty. The core belief of every samurai is that loyalty is everything. Loyalty is greater than life, greater than love, greater than anything. Once one gives one's pledge, it must be adhered to for his entire life, and even beyond. Not only must the samurai never lie to or steal from his lord, but he should never say anything to undercut his master when in public. If one's master commands you to take your own life, it is a greater shame to refuse than to simply die. What matters a moment of pain to an eternity of dishonor?

- You might wonder how loyalty matches up with being a street samurai. It doesn't. Oh, some will talk about loyalty to friends, or loyalty to whomever hires them, but at the end of the day, a street samurai is a ronin for one reason: They put their Meiyo (honor) over their Chugi (loyalty) when someone gave them an order. Their morals stepped up and told them to disobey. This single act marks them in the eyes of other samurai. More on that when we get to company men.
- Hard Exit

- Most who follow the samurai code take a dim view of indiscriminate slaughter. As warrior-poets, they're supposed to be better than that. They focus on skill weapons, like pistols, rifles, and, yes, the katana, more than spray-and-pray. Of course, this didn't stop the originals from adopting rifles when they first hit Japan in 1543 and it didn't stop the modern ones from adopting smartguns. I see two camps on the matter; one that takes more pride in their craft and shuns the burst-fire style, and another that embraced the Uzi III almost as hard as the Ares Predator. The weapon on one's hip says a lot about how the individual will act—and who you want to hire.
- Cosmo

OMERTA, THE CODE OF SILENCE

Restriction: Cannot kill police officers. Cannot oppose a superior in the family. Must not give information to legal authorities.

The classic Mafia code is found, more or less, in every major criminal organization, but rarely is it so strong or so notable as it is in La Cosa Nostra. While the code of silence, where no Mafioso will talk to the authorities even if it means going to jail for a crime they didn't commit, is the most well-known aspect of this code, it's only one section. There is also an obligation to seek revenge for harm delivered. Ideally this is delivered personally, but if the harmed individual is weakened, incarcerated, or otherwise not able to complete the task themselves, they may seek a patron to inflict justice on their behalf. This creates a network of favors and obligations, where powerful men protect weaker men, and in return no one exposes these activities to the police. The code of silence applies to all those who have been helped by the Mafia, be it in having fines lifted, daughters protected, loans given, or murderous vengeance against the killer of a family member delivered. So crime carries on, and the authorities are regularly stymied.

- Simply summed up: Snitches get stitches.
- Butch

There are downsides to the code, of course. If you're accosted, mugged, or robbed, you suck it up in silence, or appeal to a local made man, but you never go to the police. If you get accused of a crime, you never say a single word in your defense. If you're getting a ten-year sentence for a crime a Don's nephew did, you're going to go in, but you can rest assured that you'll be taken care of inside the prison. Pampered, if you stay true, eliminated if you crack. Do your time quietly, and the community will embrace you when you get out. Sing like a bird, and they hug you with knives out.

WHAT ABOUT THE TRIADS?

While Omerta can be used, with some tweaking, for the Yakuza, the Vory, and many other organized criminal syndicates, the Triad bonding process is quite different. Bound by magical forces, those who would speak up or betray the organization can expect to die quite horribly as soon as they attempt it. If a player character took such an oath, then the gamemaster will find himself in a quandary; you can only threaten it so many times before the trigger has to be pulled and the character eliminated. Many gamemasters may shy away from such a thing, which winds up in a character having a negative quality that never actually comes into play. As noted before, a disadvantage that isn't a disadvantage isn't worth any points. As such, gamemasters shouldn't allow a player character to take a Triad oath as a negative quality unless they are ready to follow through on the consequences of the vow being broken. Players and gamemasters alike should stand warned!

- An important oversight is that a follower of Omerta also follows a code of non-aggression with the police. Attacking officers brings too much heat on the men higher up the chain and is forbidden. Police officers' families are also off limits. Bribery, trickery, seduction, all that is fair, but you never, ever, get violent with a badge. This is especially true in New Orleans.
- 2XL

THUG LIFE, THE CODE OF THE STREETS

Restriction: Must always wear gang colors, must donate half of all earnings beyond lifestyle to the gang.

While a general code of silence follows the code of the streets (which is unsurprising given how often street gangs interact with organized crime), it's nowhere near as strong as the Mafia code. While a made man will never admit their membership in "this thing of ours," a ganger is required to wear their colors at all times. Removing them, for example when passing through another gang's territory to enact a raid on a third gang, is possible, but deeply shameful and humiliating. Most would rather fight than strike the colors, and gang-related shootings over someone simply wearing the wrong color shirt happen weekly all across the UCAS. Membership in a gang requires being jumped in (doing a crime set by senior members), beat in (the entire gang beats the potential new member bloody), or sexed in by sleeping with the right people. Once in, a ganger is a ganger for life, with the benefits and obligations that this carries with it. In particular, all gangers pay dues to their leaders, who in turn pay off their leaders, and so on up the chain. This is typically half of any loot they bring in, which goes into the pockets of higher-ups as well as the gang war chest. Less well known is the fact that gangs always pay back into their community, hosting parties, taking care of sick relatives, and keeping other gangers out of their turf, thus providing protection. Done well, this creates a community that isn't willing to turn the gang members over to the police. Done poorly, you get neighborhoods that have been known to chip in and hire shadowrunners to drive gangers out.

- There's much more information about gangers, the Mafia, and more in our *Vice* download from a few years back. In terms of their code, just remember to wear the colors, shun the cops, and pay your dues. That last one is the thing that often chafes members as they grow in power and income.
- Glitch

HARMONY WITH NATURE, THE SHAMAN'S CODE

Restriction: May only Bind spirits after agreeing to a fair exchange of services (see below) Must always treat spirits with respect. Must honor deals made with spirits.

The phrase "Harmony with Nature" has come into vogue as a sort of overall coverage of shamanic traditions, with the specifics of each nation, tribe, and indeed individual shaman being their own. Treating spirits as brothers and the Earth as alive and holy, and teaching that man's spirit is equal to those of the natural world, not greater, are vital aspects of the belief system, no matter if the spellcaster is a Navajo, a rat shaman from the sewers, or a new-age crystal waver in college. Environmentalism is always a key tenet, with man having no right to despoil nature and anti-pollution or holistic overtones followed through life. This shouldn't be seen as anti-science, as those who follow this code are often pushing the edges of recycling, alternative energy, and similar technologies. They are more than willing to use tech if it does not put a burden on Mother Earth. Services from spirits aren't commanded, but rather requested, with the shaman making sacrifices in their honor on a regular basis, often taking up personality aspects as requested for a certain length of time. Healing a sick child might require nothing more than a thanks and the burning of a plant sacred to the spirit, while participating in a battle could require the shaman to wear a memento of the battle, such as a bullet casing, or undergoing scarification of an injury. Some spirits make even stranger requests, such as never sleeping facing the west, only washing with dirt instead of water, and so on. Some tasks last for an hour, some for a day or month, while others are lifetime agreements for the most important of acts. In this way, every shaman soon develops an array of odd habits, worn trinkets, or odd ways of speaking, as they honor many spirits at once.

- Our brothers aid the crops, protect our homes, and heal the sick. Playing the drum at sunset or adding a charm to my necklace is a small price to pay for such a friendship.
- Man-of-Many-Names

One of the more unusual aspects of Harmony is that "nice" spirits are never bound, while "evil" ones are sealed away. The idea of never having elementals on call for dire situations is utterly alien to most hermetics, but the shamans claim that spirits are more willing to be called when they know they are never at risk of being enslaved.

- Oh now that's just misrepresenting things entirely.
- Ethernaut

- Is it? If you have a better term for forcing someone to wear a collar, come when demanded, and engage in any task no matter how servile, demeaning, or existence-threatening, I'm willing to listen.
- Axis Mundi

- We should talk more about this in the Wiz Lounge. And might I say how much I hate Slamm-0! for the name?
- Frosty

- You may not. Ah, the power of being a moderator! Mwahahahahahahahaa!
- Slamm-0!

WHITE HATS, THE CODE OF THE HACKER

Restriction: Cannot destroy/erase information. May edit if, and only if, a copy is kept safe and easy to return.

This one gets tricky. You see, for decades, the corps have been trying to paint themselves as the good guys, nobly protecting the common man from the evils of technomancers, rogue AIs, and that most dastardly of betrayers, the hacker. They call themselves "white hats" in an effort to claim "good guy" status and relegate the decker society as "black hats," or bad guys. The internal terminology predates them, however, and while the black hats wear the name of their destruction and chaos proudly, the true white hats are those hackers who follow the basic ideals of Richard Stallman. The best known of these is that "Information should be free," but related to that are the ideals that one should push the limits of programming, art, and similar activities as far as possible. One must first find the limits of what's possible, then strive to go beyond that, passing what one has learned onwards to the world at large so that others can push the limits ever further. Destroying information is utterly against their belief system, as are assorted copyright laws and other activities that restrict the free flow of information from those who have it to those who want it. A strong subset of this community further engages in pranks, in a sense planting a flag that shows that they were able to penetrate an area without causing actual damage. Files are moved to folders and set idle, not erased, while the creator's own iconography goes up in the hole, or a host will be reprogrammed to mock the company that it belongs to. The host, though, is never actually damaged, and corporate hackers are not physically harmed.

- FastJack told me that he met Stallman a few times, back when he was a kid. It's one of the reasons he created JackPoint in the first place. Jokes aside, the cyberdeck designs and code that we've sent through Shadowland are a way of paying him back for this. You're missed, big guy.
- Slamm-0!

- The very idea of free software sets the Corporate Court's teeth on edge. Shadowrunners might be part of doing business, but a world without proprietary software is one where corporate power starts to crumble. There's a reason GOD hunts hackers, not street samurai.
- Glitch

THE CODE OF WUXIA

Restriction: May not harm the innocent. May never accept bribes or misuse authority. May not serve the corrupt.

A legendary Chinese adventurer of ancient days was called Youxia (literally, "wandering force"), a masterless warrior who traveled the countryside, righting wrongs and fighting injustice with a particular hatred for corruption and the loss of nobility of those who held office. A martial hero's life was one to bring retribution to the ignoble, to remove oppressive lords (as opposed to just lords, who were to be honored and possibly be brought in as government officials), and to use their strength to protect those unable to protect themselves.

Many of today's Wuxia take for themselves a name of one of the 108 Stars of Destiny from the classical book *Shui Hu Zhuan*. These figures were former demons who were reborn as mortal heroes, fighting for justice. This gives rise to names such as "Nine Tattooed Dragons," "Sacred Handed Scholar," or "Smiling Tiger," but some choose to create a new name for themselves rather than embrace one of history. Regardless of the name chosen, they all fight against errant authority in the name of justice.

- Wuxing has massively expanded their magical division in the past few years and has used several of these figures in their marketing campaigns. The assorted warring states that once were China feature many a wandering hero fighting against the despotic rulers of one country or another, and Wuxing has found that their faces are amazing marketing tools. In return, they usually get access to some high-quality foci from Wuxing's Shaolin-approved line. Abbot Tang Wu is surprisingly savvy for a monk and has kept money flowing into the temple's coffers. There were some grumbles about the materialistic nature of this, but he states the revenue is for upkeep of the grounds and to ensure that the monks have no worldly needs to distract them. It looks like he's the real deal beyond that, without any of the usual trappings of wealth you'd expect him to have if he were corrupt.
- Sticks

- Some of that money gets funneled into the Wuxia all across the world. Monkey Mocks the Donkey from the Treetops (or Mocking Monkey, for short) has been

fighting against the Aztlan government for years. While Aztechnology suffered a few punches, Monkey's funding has been quietly increased. Trouble for Aztlan is trouble for Aztechnology, and trouble for Aztechnology is market opportunity for Wuxing. The man might be altruistic, but Tang Wu ain't nothin' to fuck with.

- Plan 9

- There's a lot of crossover between the Wuxia and Aztlan luchadores, of all things. Fighting corrupt officials, donating money to orphans or religious bodies, going after organized crime, feeding the hungry, and oh yeah, being an awesome fighter as well.
- Slamm-0!

- And now I have an explanation for those qi focus masks I saw last week. Thank you!
- 2XL

THE PALADIN'S CODE (A.K.A. ELVEN CHIVALRY)

Restriction: Cannot break one's word. Cannot harm the innocent. Must not allow art or beauty to come to harm.

While chivalry might famously be dead in most of the modern world, the elves of Tír Tairngire have always had a love of all things romantic and musty. The ideals of the elven paladin run thick in that nation, and via assorted media sources and elf posing, have spread out to large swaths of the world, recycling something old into something new. Key aspects of the code are to protect the motherland (the exact elven homeland varies, of course), to obey the elven crown, to always keep one's word as sacrosanct, to be generous and noble, and to fight against evil and injustice. Many true believers add romantic overtones to this, such as humility, an aspiration to personal purity, and an appreciation of all things artistic and beautiful. The loyalty aspects are somewhat more transitory, with some pledging to defend a specific someone as a bodyguard unto death (or beyond), while others accept the leadership of an elven gang as a "crown in exile," as long as said gang "Prince" upholds the core beliefs.

- Have you seen Prince Conall Taylor? <siiigh> S o dreamy!
- /dev/grrl

- Sorry, sweetie, he takes his vows very, very seriously. Damn his eyes.
- Turbo Bunny

- The paladins of Tír na nÓg embrace the religious aspects more strongly than those of Tír Tairngire.
- Frosty

- For certain values of religion, maybe.
- Thorn

- All of them take the loyalty oaths seriously. Tales of paladins being blacklisted, going underground, hiding in the shadows for thirty years, doing all manner of dirty deeds, then eventually returning to the Tír to have their name cleared by a prince are gold for media writers, but there's also truth to them. Just ask Prince Evan Parris.
- Icarus

- Or Parris' son, Rook. It's even odds if he's in Portland or Puyallup at any point in time.
- Turbo Bunny

- Don't think that it's elf-only in paladin-land, by the way. There are more than a few orks who were Rinelle ke'Tesrae who still think of Larry Zincan as "their" prince and who want to tear down the system and rebuild a just society. Just saying.
- Sounder

THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

Restriction: Must provide medical aid if able. Must not use lethal medicine. Must keep a patient's confidence.

While often summed up as "Do no harm," the Hippocratic Oath is actually a moral code that includes several ideals. The Covenant with Patients is the best known to the layman, where physicians pledge to do their best to heal the sick, but confidentiality between doctor and patient or a refusal to impart lethal treatment is close behind. Other ethical codes the oath conveys are to avoid sexual contact with one's patients, to do what's best for the patient not the physician, and, at least in theory, a willingness to submit to the judgment of the gods of medicine should they become an oath-breaker. The oath has been re-written dozens of times in history, and many megacorps have fashioned their own readings that allow their doctors to undertake experiments in the name of profit. Those shadowrunners who follow the "true" oath put healing above profit and often find themselves out of work, or in shadow clinics, where they struggle against the medical misdeeds of their former comrades.

- Hey Butch! Isn't the first line of this thing "Do no harm?" How do you put bullets in people?
- Kane

- I swear to protect my patients, but the oath isn't a suicide pact. Damn fool waves a gun at my people, he gets himself shot. If he lives, I patch him up free of charge. Taught a few

of them to be nurses or orderlies. Being a doctor means a lot of things, but pacifism is a personal choice.

- Butch

- Being a teacher is a big thing, as is being a proper houseguest. A doctor never steals from a patient he visits, seduces a dying man's wife, or gossips about whatever weird fetish magazines are left out in the open. You pass on education, not slander.
- Nephrine

- I hear Gateskeeper makes housecalls, right TB?
- /dev/grrl

- I teach him about cars, he helps the community deal with feral AIs. It's a fair exchange of knowledge, is all.
- Turbo Bunny

- A real doctor only charges what the patient can afford. The bastards who string your family along and bleed you dry while keeping you technically alive aren't worthy of the name. It also means you don't pick sides. My office is neutral ground; if two gangs rumbled and both bring in wounded, they both get stitched up. Same for cops, shadowrunners, whatever.
- Butch

THE SOLDIER'S CODE

Restriction: Must obey orders from superiors. Must not loot the dead or allow them to be looted. Must not lie to superiors. Must maintain honorable conduct and obey the rules of war. May never torture or harm prisoners.

"I will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do." Those simple words are written on West Point's Honor Monument, and those words, or similar variations, are upheld by most major militaries in the world. An ethical grounding is considered essential for having trust in one's fellow soldiers, and cheating on tests for senior positions leaves your subordinates vulnerable in the field when faced with a situation that they trusted you to know, but that you didn't. Not only are solders expected to keep themselves to this strict code, but they are to ensure that their brothers in arms are similarly upstanding, in order to ensure that everyone can be trusted. As this sadly implies, many say the words with their mouths but never keep them in their hearts. True soldiers would never steal from the dead, nor allow their comrades to undertake such looting, nor would they lie when called out for a possible infraction. It's one thing to fail to follow through on a task, but quite another to not admit to it when called upon. One weak link risks the entire unit, so such wayward soldiers must be rooted out and removed.

- The ideal doesn't match the reality in most units. There's always a supply sergeant who has an uncanny ability to procure things, or someone willing to cover for you so you can get plastered on your birthday. If every soldier was able to keep to this high level of ethical behavior, we'd never hear about officers getting fragged or rapes occurring in the field. Those few bad apples give the rest a black mark, and so they're ruthlessly hunted down by better units.
- Sticks

- The opposite's also true. In a band of lowlife scum with guns, the stand-up guy ruins the "fun" and gets driven out. I know a few shadowrunners who enlisted expecting a life of noble service and honorable conduct, wound up being surrounded by corruption, and mustered out as soon as possible. They tend to frown on debauchery in their teammates and enforce some much-needed discipline, but often aren't well liked. Respected, but not beloved.
- Stone

- But they always bring the coolest guns.
- Slamm-0!

THE AKICHITA CODE

Restriction: Never show fear. Challenge your strength against worthy foes. Do not allow yourself or your loved ones to fall into decadence or slothful behavior. Never harm the weak or innocent.

One of the newest, and more controversial, codes is that of the Akichita, or warrior society, of the Sioux. Originally a Lakota creed, Akichita has been branching out into neighboring communities and has been notably embraced by the younger members of the Cascade Orks in the Salish-Shidhe nation. From there, it's being passed into Seattle's Ork Underground and ork gangs. Originally, an Akichita fraternity was for the young men of a tribe to gather together and learn from one another, serving as protectors of their people, hunters, and warriors when needed. The spirit of brotherhood it carried was similar enough to gang codes of honor to be easily taken up, while the Sioux traditions of pride and strength made it appealing to impressionable ork teens. A follower of Akichita is expected to protect the tribe (or neighborhood) against all threats, giving their life to save the women and children. They are further expected to keep their brothers strong, testing them for weakness and pushing them to higher levels of personal ability. An Akichita warrior must show bravery and strength, and few instances of this are as telling as counting coup. Those who follow Akichita often compete with one another for battle honors, such as being the first into a fight or claiming a victory over the toughest foe, re-

turning with trophies of their victory and holding one's honor highly. A protector and policeman as well as warrior, the Akichita follower is compelled to teach others whatever he knows, so that his strength can be shared with the whole.

- "Counting coup" is the act of touching an enemy with a bare hand, or a coup stick, then getting away, showing that you were brave enough to risk death, quick enough to get away, and strong enough that you could have killed them if you wanted to but that there would be no challenge in the act. They take this very seriously.
- Stone

- Serious or not, it's still stupid. You get close enough to knife a guy, *you fraggin' knife the guy!*
- Kane

- The people who follow the Akichita code also collect feathers. Your brothers determine when you earn one, with one awarded for being the first in battle, for counting coup, or similar notable activities. If you manage to earn ten, you also earn the right to wear a headdress. Go near one of these guys with feathers in your hair and they'll probably demand to know how you earned them and will rip them off if you just wear them as decoration. There are serious pride issues at work.
- Hard Exit

YOU BROKE IT AGAIN?!

If a player continues to break their Code of Honor whenever it seems to be a problem, figuring that a loss of 1 Karma here or there's no big deal, a gamemaster should feel free to up the price as they see fit. A second infraction could burn off a point of Edge until they make amends, while a third could cost them all of their Edge for the entire adventure (or reduce their Karma award for that mission to zero).

While a pure three-strikes-and-out rule isn't always the right solution, a gamemaster who finds a player not giving his code his due is fully within their rights to insist that the quality be bought off with Karma before any can be spent elsewhere; after all, if they're not going to follow it, they shouldn't get points for it.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

What, you thought there was only honor among thieves? Please. While most of us in the shadows like to think of ourselves as the icons of good behavior and best of people, the truth is that the megacorps and the people who live full-face in the bright lights have their own codes of honor, and sometimes they even hold to them in the face of piles of nuyen. Sometimes.

BUSHIDO 2.0

Restriction: Must always follow the commands of one's superiors, no matter the personal cost.

As noted before, Bushido's rebirth swept across the corporate world, triggering an entire generation's adoption of the Bushido code into corporate life. Most of these neo-samurai are executives who've likely never held a weapon in their lives but whose status as lords in the feudal-corporate empire gives them sway over scores of lesser lights. Rewarding experienced security forces, or corporate soldiers, with a samurai status elevates them to the lowest rung of corporate nobility—still below the masters but a cut above the common worker. It's this class that holds to the new Bushido the tightest, expecting to see their loyalty ultimately rewarded with promotions and power. They follow the Way of the Samurai, but rather than focus on Meiyo, or honor, they hold Chugo, duty, to be the highest of the virtues.

These corporate samurai obey whatever order comes from above, no matter how shameful or dishonorable. One cannot put one's honor above one's better, and if they command you to toss someone out a window, cut down your cousin, or falsify records to implicate your best friend, you either obey or slit your stomach for an honorable escape.

- In truth, these sorts of commands are the minority. Real humans have limits to their loyalty, and while it's a dishonorable mark of shame, orders are refused if truly horrid. Those who make such refusals ordinarily accept whatever punishments their lord sets forth, which range from simple shaming and humiliation to demotion to requiring a sacrifice to show that they're truly apologetic to stripping someone of their rank and SIN entirely and have them escorted from the corporation. A smaller number refuse and take to the streets and become street samurai, becoming simple ronin who could no longer serve their masters. Committing *seppuku*, the ancient ritual of suicide, is actually quite rare, but the few times it has happened, it's been glorified and spread throughout the media, leading many to assume that it's the norm.
- Baka Dabora

- Surin Supachi is the last truly big-name executive to slit his belly. It'd been over five years since anyone of note had otherwise done it, but his death continues to be shown in trideo and sim tragedies. Samurai drama—it always ends in death and tears.
- Puck

- And with the glamorization, he'll lead many others down the path. Suicide's stupid, kids. There's nothing on the other side.
- Butch

THE CODE OF THE WHITE HAT

Restriction: Must not take advantage of law-abiding Matrix users. May not use lethal code against fellow deckers.

To mangle a quote over eighty years old, their mission is to mend and defend the Matrix, protecting the citizens from the predators in the digital jungle. They track down identity thieves, build walls to keep out software pirates, and root hidden deckers out of their lairs and into black vans for processing. The best of them might one day be elevated to hands of GOD. The world's currency is digital, and if nuyen can't be trusted, then the entire global economy grinds to a screeching halt. Don't think that this means that they're all inoffensive little yes men—in fact, these are some of the best hackers out there today. They have to be in order to try to stay one step ahead of the curve while building cures for viruses, extractors for malware, and firewalls to keep out the monsters. They practice penetration and code-breaking on one another, trying to get past their own corporation's security in order to figure out how those dirty deckers would do it, then set up traps for them, all in the name of protecting mother corp and her vulnerable children. They see themselves as the good guys, the watchmen in the night who keep the dark at bay. Always remember that they don't want to hurt you; they just want to keep their people safe. Stay away and everything's fine, but get in their business and you become their prey.

- Most of them are doing it for your own good, by the by. They scoop up talented deckers from the barrens, clean them up, give them a nice place to live, a social life, and an impressive salary, all for the small price of signing on the dotted line.
- Glitch

- At the cost of your freedom, you mean. I'll never have a ball and chain around *my* ankle!
- Slamm-0!

- Give me a corrupt cop any day. These guys are near zealots. An evil guy'll stop harassing you when you don't entertain him anymore, but someone who wants to save you has a moral obligation to keep it up until you repent.
- Bull

- That said, you *can* find common ground with them now and again. They're good to toss data at about the latest virus, or when a feral AI is munching on people. Essentially, as long as you're the smaller threat, they're usually willing to help out.
- Pistons

THE CODE OF THE GOOD COP

Restriction: To serve as an officer of the law, without fear, favor, or discrimination. To protect those in need and, if necessary, to lay down your life in the service of duty. To hold your personal conduct beyond reproach and bring no shame upon your organization.

Like many of the other codes, the concept of "To Serve and Protect" is found in every culture, where the strong step in to protect the vulnerable. When it comes to cops, the old eighty-ten-ten ratio is a good one to remember: Ten percent are crooked, ten percent are pure, and the other eighty percent are trying to be clean while having trouble keeping their hands out of the dirt. That top ten percent are the ones that you can count on; they're the thin blue line standing firm between civilians and criminal dangers of all kinds. Most cops are privatized now, and the needs of the corp outweigh the needs of the populace, but even in those folds you can find a few who put justice first. If you find a cop who'll turn in his own brothers for misdeeds—from destroying evidence to police brutality to selling guns and BTLs to straight-up murder—you grab hold of them tightly because they're someone you can trust. Most never get high rank, as their honesty rattles the cages of the corrupt brass above, and some of them are willing to turn to the shadows for a little extra juice.

- Normally, the average officer forms up a shield for his brothers, regardless of their guilt or innocence. Much like soldiers, when you face death on a regular basis, you form close bonds with your co-workers. The Good Cop is one of the few who'll turn on his fellow officer if they are, in fact, guilty. This makes them a pariah in their own precinct and subject to re-assignment or transfer.
- Kay St. Irregular

- You have no idea how much I miss SPD right now.
- Bull

- I have my eye on a young lady in Knight Errant right now that I'd like to bring over to JackPoint on a probationary basis.
- Glitch

- I'm not so sure if that's such a good idea ...
- Netcat

- No offense, 'Cat, but that's not your call to make. That's for the three admins.
- Glitch

- What, you don't like "Three Count" as a name? I had t-shirts made!
- Slamm-0!

THE HERMETIC CODE

Restriction: Never destroy information, especially magical knowledge. Always speak the truth and denounce falsehood. Capture rare things intact rather than destroy the unknown.

The study of knowledge itself, the hunt to find absolute Truth, the belief that perfection can be achieved—these are the driving thoughts of those who follow the Hermetic Code. Hermetics understand that a Thing—be it a song, a dish, or a magical spell—can be perfected, and furthermore that, once this perfect form is found, it simply cannot be improved upon. In older times, it was tied in with religion and the hunt for proof of God's existence, but the return of magic to the world changed the focus quite a bit. The three pillars of Hermetic thought are found in alchemy, which is the study of matter; astronomy, the study of the stars; and thaumaturgy, the study of magical forces. In these studies, it's believed that universal truth can be found. Note that not all who follow the Hermetic Code are magicians, nor are all hermetic magicians followers of the Hermetic Code! There's enough cross-pollination that the words have become conflated, but the philosophy of universal truth is far more rare than the simple "I can work magic. Do you have a book of spells? Fantastic!" process followed by many hermetics. The leading followers of the code were those at the front of magical research, and they became the leading lights that everyone else followed.

- <snort>
- Frosty

- There's a surprising crossover between White Hat deckers and Hermetic magicians. Both are logical, rational mindsets dedicating to finding out, and passing on, knowledge. Hermetics tend to be less willing to share until they're absolutely certain that they're right, but both have an untamable curiosity.
- Axis Mundi

- There are some secrets that should not be learned, some doors sealed that should not be opened. They meddle in what they cannot know. Listen to the spirits! Their wisdom will guide you.
- Man-of-Many-Names

- Most of them wind up on the corporate side of things; as noted, a good mage can pull down a solid paycheck, have a great place to live, and embark on any number of research projects at the small cost of signing away their freedom, but there remain a few street magicians who believe they can find things out better on their own. They're not common, but they exist.
- Cosmo

Shane
06

THE SPICE OF RUNNERS' LIVES

After a while, breaking into corp A for corp B might become kind of old hat. What about all those other jobs out there in the dark, dystopian shadows of the Sixth World? The answer, my chummer, is right here. You won't find fully fleshed out adventures, but open your mind and start to rev up that imagination engine because in the next few pages, you'll find plenty of fuel to make your mind race.

ODD JOBS

Megacorporations can hire runners to do this kind of work, but more often than not, these jobs are contracted from smaller firms that don't have extraterritoriality protection like their big brothers but still need access to critical resources. We'll get into the specifics of some of those groups and companies later—for now let's take a look at some of the dirty deeds they may want done dirt cheap.

HUNTING

When the AAAs want certain resources they can usually just buy the property where they're found, exert their extraterritorial rights, and strip the land. When smaller corps, independent or criminal organizations, individuals, and even governments want resources like that, they need to use other avenues. Sometimes those avenues take them onto megacorporate property and you have the typical snatch-and-grab, but other times the resources in question aren't in a lab, and teams have to be sent to wander the dark corners of the Sixth World.

REAGENTS

Not all magical reagents are created equal. To find the purest, most potent of these arcane boosters, the search must be done in mystically pure places. These regions of the world may not be protected by laser tripwires and armored goon squads, but that doesn't make them safe. Reagents, or at least the components for them, are rarely found in urban environments. Runner teams can be hired to gather reagents and components on their own, act as security for others headed that way, or even get contracts to sit on a valuable site and keep others away.

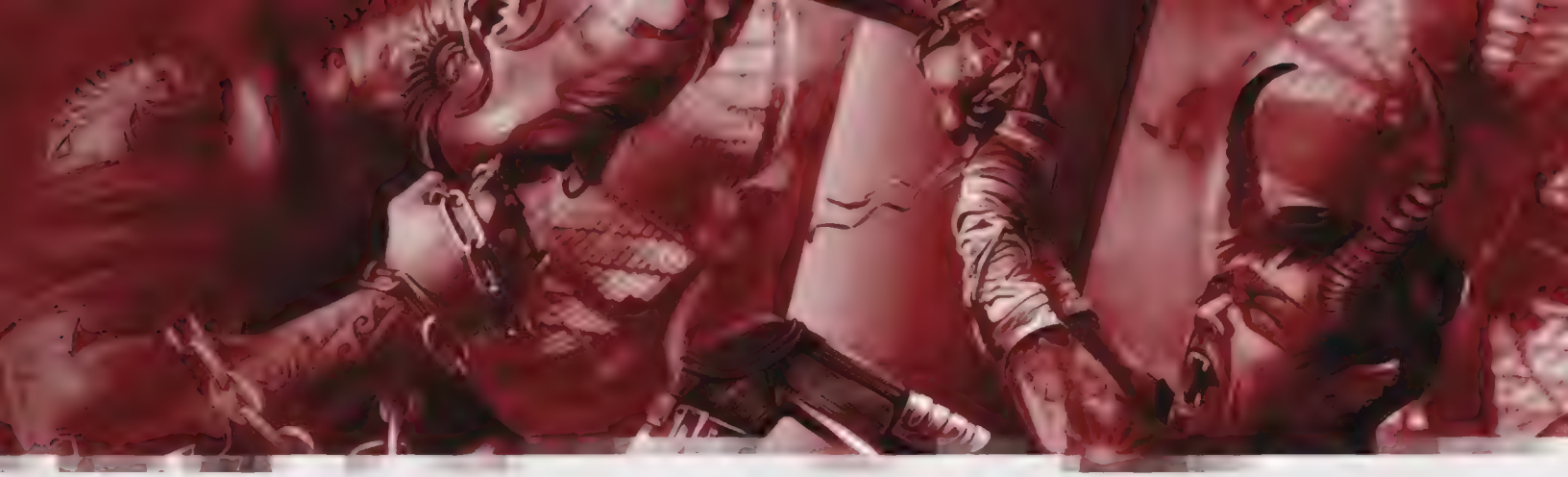
These areas aren't going to offer the typical opposition. The first enemy a runner is going to have to overcome when working away from the world's sprawls is their own paranoid nature. Hoofing it through the wilds in full body armor is going to get tiring. A few Fatigue Tests (p. 172, *SR5*) with some armor-based modifiers will encourage the runners to ditch some of that excessive protection. An overnight stay with no sleep (p. 172, *SR5*) because of that armor may wear them down a little more. When bad things finally show up, remember whose turf the runners are on. Some of those paracritters or spirits probably like the flavor of the local mojo, so they may benefit from an aspected background count (p. 31, *Street Grimoire*) or positive Sneaking modifier due to their familiarity with the area. Also, don't forget about other groups that may be interested in the area as well. These groups can use long-range shots and other offensive tactics, putting the runners on the defensive so they can only resist with some duck-and-cover techniques before having to go out hunting to protect whatever they're after.

PARANIMALS

This is like the next step up from going out for reagents. In fact, many paranimals are themselves a source of reagent materials. These targets don't sit still, waiting to be found, and many have a few interesting powers at their disposal to protect themselves. Nature and fatigue are possible obstalcles, as are other groups on the hunt. Though remember, the odds of two groups hunting the same critter at the same time are pretty slim unless it's a very specific critter. Be sure to consider other critters that might be in the area, as well as mundane critters that might get involved to defend their territory or their young. Often, the biggest difficulty with snatching paracritters is the frequent need for live subjects and the difficulties of keeping those subjects sedated without killing them or getting them back across borders without losing them to border guards, other hunters, go-gangs, greedy coyotes, hungry critters, or anything else that devious gamemaster might concoct.

SPIRITS

While paracritters may roam specific places, spirits can be found anywhere. Most of the general types of spirits that your everyday summoner drags onto our plane to



do their bidding are not targets for runners. What we're talking about here are free spirits (p. 202, *Street Grimoire*), toxic spirits (p. 87, *Street Grimoire*), blood spirits (p. 91, *Street Grimoire*), shadow spirits (p. 91, *Street Grimoire*), insect spirits (p. 93, *Street Grimoire*), and shedim (p. 93, *Street Grimoire*). While those last two may often find themselves in a physical shell, others are not so limited. These beings of pure mana require some special skills and precautions in order to capture, and they are never happy to be trapped in the physical realm.

The hunt for spirits can also take runners to very interesting places and bring them into contact with some unexpected opposition. This, in addition to the ability of most spirits to look like anything they wish, adds an extra level of difficulty to tracking them down. Whether it's in the Chicago Containment Zone looking for the few bugs that have avoided the Ares Firewatch teams; the Mojave looking to get some questions answered about the intensity of spirit activity there; Aztlan trying to squeeze blood from an obsidian rock; or any of the toxic domains around the world trying to snag a bounty, runners can end up anywhere facing anything when the spirit world is involved.

HEAD CASES

Unlike the others mentioned so far, the threat of Cognitive Fragmentation Disorder (CFD) is technological instead of arcane in nature. It's also highly contagious and can easily turn into a campaign all its own (for rules on using head cases in a game, see p. 195, *Stolen Souls*). What will make these hunts interesting and different from normal runs are the contacts that can be used as employers. Fixers, runners, mobsters, and even corporate Johnsons sometimes have friends, and when one of those friends goes missing they seek help. Erratic behavior is one of the earliest signs of infection, and just that clue could get the hackles up on the runner's necks. The paranoia of infection, alongside the lack of a known cure, should make for an interesting aside to the normal corporate snatch-and-grabs. Jobs or side jobs of this nature also bring the campaign and the game to a more personal level for the characters. These jobs bring into question their morals and standards as they worry about their own infection versus the infection of others around them.

INFECTED

Speaking of infections, there are things worse than CFD, like HMHVV. The Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus, in all its wide varieties, was scary already with the threat of vampires (p. 140), ghouls (p. 138), and manananggal (p. 100, *Street Grimoire*), but thanks to this book, you now have bandersnatches (p. 136), loup-garous (p. 139), wendigos (p. 140), and the scariness of HMHVV infection hitting the player characters (p. 142) to keep players worried when they get into bloody fights with carriers of the virus. The idea of Infection can be scary, but perhaps worse is the fear of losing a loved one. This can lead runners to getting caught up in the personal affairs of their contacts and employers.

STRANGE LOCALES

Much like nature has been shown to play an adversarial role in some of the ideas above, the location of an operation itself can be an adversary for a runner team. Whether the location is hostile in nature, such as the ocean depths or the vastness of space, or is made difficult due to the lack to familiarity of the runners, such as jobs that take them to foveae or astral planes, the places in which they operate can kill them as quickly as the lead that usually flies at their faces.

OCEANIC OPERATIONS

Covering the vast majority of Earth's surface, the oceans, seas, and lakes of the world provide a lot of volume in which shadowruns can take place. These places are often used by megacorporations for the natural security provided by their remote and open surroundings. Jobs can occur on ships, research or resource rigs, old submarine bases, submarines, deep-sea labs or habitats, undersea caverns, ruins of ancient civilizations, or anywhere your mind wants to wander. The nice thing about the vastness of the oceans is that they are constantly changing and anything can be hidden, or reappear, anywhere.

For the runners, these places are going to provide a series of difficulties the team is probably not used to

handling. Even a stationary undersea habitat is not going to be easy to find. Yes, they might have GPS coordinates, but that just means you know where, on the surface, someone tagged the base, and getting to a specific set of GPS coordinates by boat is not easy. Roads are easy to follow and most runners can handle that, but navigating the high seas is a game of degrees—in truth, tenths or hundredths of degrees. Small errors send you farther off target the longer you follow them, meaning runners need to be on the ball the entire time they are at sea.

And once the team has the spot, they need to get down to the real target, most of which are deeper than light can go. Factor in underwater currents that can push the search off course on the way down, and by the time they get to the ocean floor, they could be kilometers off target in a vast blackness with no signals reaching them thanks to the interference of the water. Then, once they find it, getting in undetected becomes the next hurdle. They could suit up and sneak in, but at those depths even a little mistake means big trouble. Same goes for docking with a station and sneaking in—when entrances are limited and few humans or machines are around to approach a station, the question of getting in without being noticed is a tough one.

Inside, they have to worry about following airlock protocols, being wary of hull breaches, and dealing with security and staff that know the place far better than they do. Buttons, knobs, valves, switches, and toggles with worn-off warning labels will keep them on their toes. A total lack of contacts, wireless, and other resources will leave them feeling disconnected and alone when any unforeseen difficulties arise.

A few location examples for spots can be found on p. 160, *Run & Gun*, but that list is but a drop of rain in the vastness of Earth's waters. Rules for troubles in the deep can be found in the **Staying Alive** chapter of *Run & Gun* (p. 156).

SPACE RUNS

Space offers many of the same security features as the oceans of Earth. Challenging accessibility, long detection ranges, and remoteness for security are all taken to the extreme outside the Earth's atmosphere. *Shadowrun* was never intended to be a space game, but sometimes a nice side story or even a fun one-shot run to set the stage for some Earthside action can be fun, offering a nice change of pace from the normal everyday corporate datasteal. Maybe the characters are moles or spies planted in the facility, and they are trying to get the inside scoop for their real masters. Maybe they're a team of infiltrators who think they are operating undercover but do not realize that they're not fooling anyone and are on the verge of having to make a fast escape. Though the classic theme for a story in space is the isolation of the characters, that doesn't have to be the case. The characters don't need to be trapped and dealing with some impending disaster—instead, they can be part of the facility's story. This is an especially good opportunity to have some CFD fun on Mars or one of the other space habitats (p. 166, *Run & Gun*) that have become a haven and breeding ground for the virus and the resulting head cases.

FOVEA RUNS

Not that an entire run should occur inside an area like a fovea (p. 33, *Street Grimoire*), which is a mobile magical void, but adding challenges like this can make any run more interesting. What happens when that combat mage can't levitate his way past every problem, or the physical adept is suddenly not so adept? These areas are great for making players think outside their normal operating procedures or bringing the attention over to the tech-based characters if they've been feeling overshadowed by the spellcasters, summoners, and ninja adepts.

While many foveae are stable and some even have warnings around them for mages to keep out, overall magic is not that scientific. Magical phenomena can appear anywhere for any reason and sometimes seem to occur for no reason at all. Often the reason for the event is lost to history, such as when echoes of a previous age of magic reappear in the Sixth World in the form of alchera events (p. 29, *Street Grimoire*).

ASTRAL JOURNEYS

The astral journey route can be used as a change of pace, a normal piece of a campaign, or as a complete alteration or redefinition of a game. What does this mean? Well, as a gamemaster you can use astral journeys as a piece of your own game where the mages go off to perform quests for their mentor spirits, discover spirit true names, perform an initiation ordeal, or get involved in any number of arcane activities. They're all exciting and add flavor through exploration of some cool and interesting metaplanes, but when you're looking to really change things up and take the group out for a crazy spin, the metaplanes can be so much more.

One of the best things about the metaplanes is that there are no absolutes. Another of the best things is that the metaplanes are infinite and infinitely different. And yet another of the bests is the complete and utter disregard for "reality" that can exist within the various metaplanes.

When looking for a change of pace, a gamemaster can set up a job that requires the team to get the aid of a powerful spirit to open an astral gateway (p. 194, *Street Grimoire*) for the team to travel through (possibly requiring an initial jaunt to the metaplanes to snag a true name just to get the spirit to cooperate). Once projecting over to a new metaplane or even just to the Dweller on the Threshold, the story possibilities multiply quickly. If the players have been wanting to try a different setting for

a bit, you can throw it at them, giving them a chance to play in a sci-fi, western, post-apocalyptic, space opera, fantasy, horror, or some other setting. It may require a little extra planning by the gamemaster, but any setting can appear in the metaplanes and the characters can suddenly be redefined.

As another interesting twist, remember that the fact that there are no absolutes on the meta planes means the effect of death is a mystery to all. Sometimes death on the metaplanes means death at home; sometimes it means expulsion from the plane, possibly home or to another plane (like hell); other times it's like a video game with a restart point; and in others it's like waking from a dream. And these rules aren't even required to stay the same between characters—they can change at any moment. Use this uncertainty to keep players on their toes and generate a memorable story for them, but be careful that the random nature of the planes does not stymie the players' efforts or leave them frustrated. Remember to play fair, but don't be afraid to challenge the characters.

Two other quick points to note about the metaplanes. First, they don't have a standard exit. Finding a way out could be an entire adventure all its own. Second, time can be skewed in the metaplanes. It can run faster or slower and can allow a relatively smooth transition between game editions, or it may allow a gamemaster to keep the game going while they wait for canon events in the world to progress to a certain point. The metaplanes are an infinitely expansive gamemaster's playground.

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

We looked at some interesting places, but what about interesting people? The other characters in the world aren't just thugs, mooks, fixers, etc.—they're Danik Gron, an ork working for the mob because it was the only family he had growing up after his family died, but he doesn't know the mob killed them. Or they're

Shelley Red, a dwarf about to screw over three different street gangs at once just because she can. Or maybe Lillbet Kassidy, an elf obsessed with Atlantis who is convinced an artifact critical to her research lies in the vault of a Wuxing-owned bank. All these people and more have a story, and pieces of those stories can pull the runners away from executive extractions and into the personal problems of their contacts.

MOM & POPS

These are the local shops and the other downtrodden citizens of the world. In the dystopian world of *Shadowrun* they exist along the periphery, especially in the barrens and slums of the world's sprawls. These are the kinds of people and groups that will offer runners favors or barter for their services because they don't have access to the kind of nuyen that the big corps do. Some "jobs" are even done for free because of personal, professional, ethical, or moral reasons. This sort of white-hat action can be an interesting aside from a campaign or even a few pieces of an ongoing storyline where the players wanted to include more details about the day-to-day lives of their characters. Runners have unique skillsets that attract a lot of attention, so no matter how low they keep their Public Awareness, their Street Cred makes them stick out.

When working for the mom & pops, runners do a lot of neighborhood work—smaller-scale jobs that still come with interesting twists and turns. This can include negotiating with a gang to leave a certain shop alone; running off a BTL dealer who has taken up residence in their building; helping evict some squatters who are troubling the neighborhood; dealing with Awakened or paranormal threats in the neighborhood; helping protect a shop's delivery shipment as it's being unloaded; or a multitude of other options that can pull runners the lives of those around them.

Missing persons can be a recurring theme in the mom & pop area. The myriad of reasons for someone to go missing from the barrens aren't all nefarious, but plenty of them are.

On the milder side of things, kids (and immature adults) run away from home all the time. Sometimes it's about abuse at home, sometimes it's for love, sometimes it's just because metahumans are not always the most chemically balanced of creatures. All of these reasons can lead a runner on a relatively calm chase that ends in some decisions the runner needs to make about bringing targets home if they had a good reason to run, especially when the job is not so much about being professional as it is about being a decent metahuman being.

A big and dark step up from that is cognitive fragmentation disorder (CFD). This twisted modification of the mind can make someone's personality disappear rather suddenly, with no clues other than a little erratic behavior before the disappearance. Along with that, the newly created head case may be actively avoiding detection. Combine this with the abilities of the head case (p. 195, *Stolen Souls*) and the risk of infection to the PCs, and a simple, friendly job can become as dangerous as any run on a megacorp.

Speaking of megacorps, that's a another place those who have disappeared could have ended up. Maybe a talent recruiter spotted a kid with potential but really didn't want to bother with the hassle of bringing their family into the corp. Or maybe an off-the-books operation needed subjects of the target's age and sex. The corp may create a cover story to throw off pursuit or even fake the subject's death. These jobs will often take the runners to places well beyond the customary risk-versus-reward parameters of most mom & pop operations, so they make interesting stories to see how far the characters may be willing to go for whoever hired or asked them to help.

Another possibly deadly source of missing persons is a *Shadowrun* classic, one that has been around since the *Missing Blood* adventure back in First Edition. Yep—insect spirits. Described more thoroughly in *Street Grimoire* (p. 93), they have been a terrifying source of missing persons for decades. While going after someone inside a corporation may be a challenge, going after someone who has been taken by insect spirits is often worse, both physically and mentally. This is the kind of story that can go from the gumshoe detective genre to the horror genre in a single scene. And again, they make a great test for characters with a moral, emotional, or ethical reason to continue the search even after a more pragmatic individual would realize it is a lost cause.

ARCANE ORGANIZATIONS

Next up for interesting employers and their potential operations are the arcane organizations of the Sixth World. These can range all the way from mom & pop level talismonger shops up to the United Talismonger Association (p. 58, *Street Grimoire*); from the local chapter of the Painted Horse Society (p. 69, *Street Grimoire*) or the Planestriders (p. 75, *Street Grimoire*) up to the Illuminates of the New Dawn (p. 59, *Street Grimoire*); or even into the realm of "smaller" corporations like Manadyne or the Atlantean Foundation. The source of the work tends to flavor the operation differently, as does the location or target of the jobs.

When working for a group filled with people who are not bound within a single world or set of planar laws, personal interactions may be very different. Mr. Johnson may be Awakened and frown on active spells in his presence. He may also make strange stipulations like, "No runner with a soiled soul may enter the temple," or "Blood cannot be spilled once you have possession of the artifact"—things that give runners something to think about, or elements that may throw a wrench into the works here and there. This can also give gamemasters the chance to think

of interesting things to do when characters fail to obey Mr. Johnson's rules. Maybe the rules are nothing but talk, or maybe the forbidden acts will awaken guardian spirits (p. 193, *Street Grimoire*), release a powerful spell, or completely block the entry/exit.

The people who do the hiring can also add flavor and variety to the job. Instead of the standard Mr. Johnson in a three-piece suit, you can have a Mr. Erewhon dressed in golf pants, a flannel, and rain boots. They can be rather eclectic in their tastes or esoteric in their speech because of the eccentric ways for which the Awakened are notorious. The magical tradition of Mr. Johnson can come into play quite strongly. Where a hermetic mage might meet in a museum, a shaman may want to meet in the park, or a follower of the Muslim tradition may wish to meet in their local mosque. All of these places provide interesting background and flavor to change things up and give variety to the runners' jobs.

These kinds of employers also tend to ask runners to go to strange places and look for even stranger things. Whether it be a trip to the Mojave for a sample of sand from Death Valley, a jaunt to Yakut to deliver a message to a spirit near Tunguska, or just meandering down into Aztlan to procure a sacred cuahuitl, these runs can take characters anywhere in the Sixth World. And even better, these jobs can push them into encounters with anything from paranormal critters to Awakened jungle tribes and carnivorous plants to hidden corporate installations. Gamemasters may decide to throw teams for a loop when they make plans for a trip to the Amazonian jungle and suddenly come across a big concrete bunker leading to a high-security secret lab.

Troubles for these types of runs also come in the form of poor intel security. These kinds of groups, unless they're secret societies (p. 65, *Street Grimoire*), aren't as secure as megacorporations, and a significant number of information leaks can occur. This means competition is far more likely, and depending on who is supporting that competition, it could mean anything from trouble with a street gang or local runner team to an encounter with dangerously bored security operatives just itching for somebody to shoot at.

GOVERNMENTS

While not the powerhouses they once were, government and shadowrunning go hand in hand. There are careers to be made, information to be stolen, and of course defense contracts that pour significant sums into the coffers of the Big Ten. Government employers offer plenty of opportunities for runners to visit different locales, getting a taste of the local flavor through interactions with their delightful government officials. Blackmail operations are quite common and often require runners to visit fancy resorts, hang around posh hotels, or scope out secluded locales such as quaint hunting lodges or chalets. Political sabotage can occur through misdirection with rally infiltrations, planting evidence of misdeeds, or modifying voting results through Matrix, magic, or muscle. And don't forget these jobs can run the gamut, from local elections all the way to the big ones for Prince or President. There is always someone who wants political power and is willing to pay to ensure they get it.

In the corporate-controlled Sixth World, governments need corporate backers to survive. Defense contracts, food-supply deals, infrastructure maintenance, and dozens of other corporate deals suspend the government between their megacorporate masters like a marionette. They sell their Matrix infrastructure rights to NeoNET so they can buy guns and tanks from Ares, while contracting Saeder-Krupp to build their highways and paying for it by allowing Renraku to install GridGuide across the nation. And that's the tale for "powerful" governments like the UCAS, CAS, England, France, etc. The weak nations simply sell themselves to the highest bidder and become a hotbed of corporate espionage and treachery. In the end, governments provide a chance to do jobs similar to corporate runs, but with a whole different cultural flavor and interesting exotic locales.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Honor amongst thieves must truly be limited to thieves in the shadows, because no other criminals really force honor onto themselves when dealing with their rivals. Though there are the occasional exceptions, such as within the extremely traditional Yakuza, dealings between the various criminal organizations are usually ruthless. They also make an interesting change of pace from the standard corp job. But working for an Organized Crime Syndicate (OCS) brings several different flavors and options into your regular *Shadowrun* game, especially when considering the groups they are hiring the runners to work against.

While doing jobs between corps is all about the bottom line, working for an OCS versus a corp is usually a different story. An OCS doesn't have the kind of funding a corp would and often operates a bartering system of Favors (p. 389, *SR5*) in order to sweeten deals for runners on the fence. Though money is a strong motivator, the ambiguous nature of a favor can be even more tantalizing and can lead to more jobs, access to sweet toys, or even a little extra comfort sleeping at night knowing the local gang owes you a few favors. These also tend to be the kinds of jobs that don't have an immediately obvious outcome or may be a single move in a larger chess match. The local Mafia hiring the runners to damage a few pipes under the local Ares office might be a distraction, a strange message, an act of sabotage to get some guys in to fix the problem, or a move to undermine the work of another OCS or corp. Another potential complication is that an OCS makes a great layer of deniability for another megacorp. They

can contract out the local gumi to hire some runners to work against another megacorp and be hidden, pulling the strings from behind the curtain of the OCS.

Then there's the tricky issue of working in the territory between one OCS and another. This stuff happens all the time as each OCS tries to solidify their operations and territory. Runners can be great assets for this when one group needs to muddy the trail early on before they make their big moves. This kind of work can be lucrative and continuous, so it's very attractive. But life is not all wine and roses here—an OCS is not a bottom-line-driven corp, and they tend to take their affairs a little more personally. This means that job results are far more likely to elicit emotional, and possibly irrational, behaviors by their employers. While a megacorporation may be a massive, emotionless entity that looks at success and failure in black and red, that consigliere the runners are targeting might take the kidnapping of his daughter quite personally, and so might the girl's brother, mother, boyfriend, close cousin, secret admirer ... you get the gist. One job can cascade into a lot of trouble for a runner working in the realms of the OCS.

Now, what can be worse and create more personal troubles than doing runs between two syndicates? How about jobs within an OCS? Consider Higori Atsu trying to undermine Michael Higori, the Morelli consigliere looking to remove internal competition to his Don, or Gregor Virilenko trying to clear his path to the top—all of these create jobs that can embroil a team of runners in all sorts of bad news. These jobs are almost guaranteed to get far more personal than most corp runners are going to be used to, including choosing sides—or more likely being bought or threatened into choosing sides. This work offers some character-driven options and carries ramifications far beyond the job. Get in too close with the Morelli Family and runners can lose contacts and job offers, or worse become a target for groups trying to weaken their new friends.

One more great opponent when playing the OCS game is the government. These aren't the monolithic powerhouses they once were, but their scrappy underdog status can make them interesting to work with—and against. An OCS may do a fair amount of business with various governments in order to keep their more legitimate operations functioning and laundering money, and they can be tenacious in chasing down the contract scraps the megacorps leave behind. These jobs are also the kind of ops that new runners can cut their teeth on. Government facilities aren't nearly as well protected as corporate research labs, and government employees are part of a big enough machine that they don't take things personally. Even if they do, they tend to lack the cash flow to really do much damage to a runner or her career. These jobs run a wide range. Government facilities and datastores hold original blueprints for many buildings, infrastructure layout documents, city-planning data, blackmail materials on overconfident officials' commlinks, and so on. It's a target-rich environment, full of opportunities depending on what the goal of the OCS is.

Another big consideration for adding flavor and variety to your Shadowrun game is the nature of the organizations themselves. Working for the Mafia is going to be way different than working for the Yakuza, the Triad, the Seoulpa Rings, or the Vory. On top of that, you have the many and varied street gangs, each with their own flavor of crazy. And like the gangs, each of the above organizations has a lot of flavor and variety between all their different sects, families, gumis, etc. The Yellow Lotus may look at failure as a reason to not hire a team again, while the 99 Blossoms may see failure as a sign of disrespect and make sure the runners feel the sting of response. All of these groups offer flavor and texture that a gamemaster can use to build up the Sixth World beyond the perceptions of the masses and really get their runners digging for info instead of resting on stereotypes.

SECRET SOCIETIES

What better place to find jobs outside the brand-hammering megacorps than a clandestine group that is willing to kill anyone who even whispers a word about it without express permission? The Black Lodge, the Aleph Society, the False Face Society, and more are out there, ready to be dropped into your game. They have jobs that start with wetwork to eliminate loose lips and move on from there. The secret societies of the Sixth World often use their fellow denizens of the shadows in order to further their ambitions. A trio of great focuses for jobs in this doubly shadowy realm are runs against other groups squatting in the dark corners of the world, operations to keep an organization secret, and work to remove cancers that may have grown within their own shadowy ranks.

First and foremost, the most likely work a runner will get from one secret society is against another secret society or an opposing, more public, society. While secret societies may operate in opposition to some megacorps or an OCS, they rarely take on such large foes directly. Jobs against other shadowy societies offer runners a chance to try out their social infiltration or interrogation skills, and that's just to make sure they aren't chasing ghosts. Some of these jobs pull runners further down into the shadows than they already live, and as the shadows get darker, they get deadlier. But the fun thing about darker and deadlier shadows is that they make cleverness and smarts that much more precious. The fear of death around every corner keeps runners on their toes.

For the gamemaster, these societies are great because they allow them to stretch their imaginations. Secret societies are exactly that, and often come and go before anyone ever puts them into a book, especially those written in-character, so canon can kiss the gam-

emaster's keister. Get wild, get crazy, and entertain the players in whatever strange way they might desire. The world is full of crazy, and that crazy often gathers in order to grow exponentially, so enjoy creating crazy secret societies. If a group like the Church of Elvis is public and acceptable in the daylight of the Sixth World, imagine what the darkness holds.

Now, how do these groups stay hidden? That answer would require the secrets of dozens of runners, both living and dead, to be revealed. Jobs to eliminate investigators, or even simply inquisitive spouses, can test the limits of the runners' moral flexibility. And when the team's hacker gets a little too nosy about who is paying their tab, they may make the team a target for the next group of runners. Datasteals against news firms, police corps, private citizens, and even the big boys are sometimes required to keep a society on the down low.

The dirtiest of deeds that all runners may get involved with is a common contract for secret societies. These groups are full of dark souls, but the occasional spark of light, and accompanying guilt, can create a rift between the society and their wayward member that can only be sealed with blood. In order to keep investigations from digging into the members and risking revelation, runners can be tapped to eliminate the problem. These jobs often come with a variety of stipulations, such as making it look like gang violence or suicide or making sure it points to person X, who is a nobody working down at the Stuffer Shack. Nothing tests the moral fabric of a runner like murdering one person and pinning a life (or death) sentence on another, totally innocent, individual. They may take the job, they may walk away, or they may work to expose what is clearly a dangerous, immoral group to the light of day—these are the decisions that make gaming especially interesting.

HEAD CASES

Have you heard of these yet? Get caught up because they are about to rock your shadow-world. The dirty and dark story can be dug into in *Storm Front, Stolen Souls,* and *Lockdown*. The broad strokes come down to a technological virus that uses nanites to write AI personalities into victims' minds while erasing the original personality. In short, it's body snatching through tech. Many of the players look the same, but other players aren't what they seem, and even those characters who look familiar might not be working the angle one might think, or they could be working more than one angle without even knowing.

Let's start at the top. Megacorporations were taken by surprise by this virus. The new Matrix came about due to a number of factors, but one was that the CFD virus was already sneaking out, and the corps realized a free and open Matrix could lead to high rates of infection across the globe. They didn't want to see that, particularly since they were having enough trouble with the cases already out there. The corps have been scrambling for subjects to study to help them understand what is happening and how they can fight it. With the high risk of infection, they have been more than happy to let shadowrunners take the risk instead of their own operatives or security forces. That means extraction jobs that may be veiled as missing persons, high-value targets, or anything in between to keep the runners from knowing they are about to come into contact with one of the most dangerous viruses of the twenty-first century. Corps are willing to let runners risk infection in this, but they may be missing the big picture. If runners get infected, they could help spread the CFD virus in the shadows, where monitoring and health care is rare. This could lead to an even faster spread of the problem. It's a dangerous game, but it's the one the corps are playing, and smart runners might even be able to get a little extra nuyen for the risk and protect themselves from becoming the next target.

The next big group of contractors that runners may come across are the wolves in sheep's clothing looking for other well-camouflaged lupines—that is, head cases looking for their kin in order to understand what has happened to them, to gather in order to further their nefarious plans, to seek protection in numbers, or simply to find a friend. These jobs offer some interesting Mr. Johnsons. Squatters who suddenly have the nuyen to hire runners thanks to newfound abilities but who still haven't realized the value of appearance to metahumans; a corporate middle manager contracting a team to find a random waitress in Redmond who they suspect is a mistress but is nothing more (or less) than another head case; a regular fixer who starts calling in all the favors runners owe her to kidnap a list of targets with no connection to each other or her; or a ganger contact who asks his buddy to pull his corporate chica from her ivory tower, though when the runner arrives she has no idea who the ganger is. These are just a few of the hundreds of possible stories that can be created by a virus that knows only the limits of its signal and the presence of nanites.

The last two run ops we'll look at are two sides of the same coin and could even turn out to be two parts of the same run. Runners are a great pool of resources to dip into for an AI that has learned the secrets of CFD and is looking for a body. Or the flipside is an AI that has written itself into a body and really doesn't like needing to eat, sleep, defecate, or suffer at the whims of the chemical menagerie that is the metahuman form. And remember that metahumans are not the only group that suffers from the effects of the CFD virus. Nearly any biological organism with a decently developed brain can get over-written. Imagine the look on the runner's faces when they realize the virtual Johnson that hired them is actually the persona of the mangy mutt that has been following them all day.

ALTERNATE IDENTITIES

If you and your players need to shake things up, look into some alternate campaign ideas by changing up the characters' roles in the Sixth World. Some of the different roles discussed in this section can start as side scenes where the runners take on the roles of their contacts and investigate a crime scene, snag an injured client, kick in the door of a rival Yakuza gambling den, or listen in on the conversation between their boss and that weird guy from Assets Management while trying to look nonchalant. Heck, they may get caught or do enough damage to their benefactors rep to get Hung Out to Dry and stuck in the shadows anyway. Maybe this gets them started on a new path, or maybe it simply represents a brief change of pace in their lives. Either way, it's good to explore new ways of pulling in a few nuyen.

The following section is not the end all be all of alternate campaign options—in fact it's really just a taste of options, not even a full meal. This is a brief look at where else a game could go if you want to play something a little different while still playing *Shadowrun*.

DOCWAGON

Playing some of the good (or less bad, or whatever) guys for a bit might be a nice change of pace for the group. The work tends to be more direct when it comes to altercations, though the planning time is shorter, and life on the other side of the corporate fence can be explored to provide some more Sixth World flavor. The group can build an HTR team and step into the world of extracting injured runners while their target's team and the local corp sec are providing obstacles and interference. Gamemasters can create some personal dilemmas by setting up a situation for medics who can't stand seeing injuries go untended where they have to decide to risk crossing those two meters of extra-territorial property to pull the client out to the street. They may also have to decide when to help innocent bystanders and when to focus on their job, watch the bottom line, and collect their paycheck. DocWagon offers that nice guy feel with a dark twist when business and morals collide.

KNIGHT ERRANT/ LONE STAR

A campaign or one-shot adventure playing as the cops (or deputies, or guys who stole some uniforms and a patrol car) can be a great way to get a different feel or vantage point for a group. These games can give perspective to the restrained power of these corporate cops that have to balance the bottom line on the scales of justice. SWAT teams can have the cool van, all the toys, the big guns, and the rules that go along with them. Characters can explore their feelings and the ways others in the world view shadowrunners to create the desired flavor. Are they anti-heroes, just plain criminals, or a source of trid fodder? The whole while they see shadowrunners through others' eyes, understanding the low esteem in which most people in the world hold them. At the same time, you can put a face on the faceless mirrored visor of law enforcement while creating a story that gives the players a chance to feel for the other guys.

CORPORATIONS

What about being on the other side of the corporate glass? Maybe the group wants a campaign where they are all Company Men, looking to move up the corporate ladder and willing to do whatever it takes to reach that next rung. Are they willing to risk failure to knock a competitor down a peg? Are they looking to shine so bright that another corp might want to extract them? Are they really working for another corp, trying to keep tabs on a rival's operations or attempting to access a specific project? These questions are just the start of what can be a great campaign where it isn't about where the next meal ticket is coming from, but instead about how far they are willing to go to succeed in the corporate devil rat race.

ORGANIZED CRIME

The last alternate campaign here stays on the criminal side but becomes more coordinated. Players can put together members of the Mafia, Yakuza, Triads, Seoulpa Rings, Vory v Zakone, or any of the hundreds of gangs in the Sixth World to work together—or at least, not against each other. These campaigns can develop the flavor for their respective organizations, pit rivals within the organizations against each other, put the players into the behind-the-scenes roles of the crime syndicate, explore just why these guys hire out runners instead of risking their own, or give the players a break from scrounging in the shadows and get a taste of the good life of a made man with resources and a family to call upon for help. Working for an organized crime syndicate provides a chance for gamemasters to build their players' worldview.

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Flipping through the trid stations, Elyas stopped briefly on the latest episode of Garrett Storm's *Building an Identity* trid series. Today's episode was "Furs," and Garrett joyfully spouted on with his typically flippant tone all about his love for all things sapient. Then he mentioned shapeshifters and oh-so-politely referred to them as "beastmen." Such a humanitarian.

It was an appropriate show to be airing before this evening's events. Then again, very little that came across the Matrix these days wasn't planned to maximize its synergy with every other corporate event on the calendar. So the airing of "Furs" on Evo's own KEVO Seattle, while MetaErgonomics was hosting a rally and announcing their new "Free Shift" line of clothes, was likely nothing more than good corporate planning. Elyas didn't really care about the megacorp's plans, only that their rally was probably going to net him six figures—even after all his expenses were considered.

He used his 'link to shut off the trid before heading out. A few more swipes in the AR and his van was running diagnostics and feeding him an inventory, his Retiarus was charging the shocknets, and Soybucks was getting his extra-dry cappuccino order and linking up with his van's GridGuide system so that his order would be ready at the moment he pulled up.

A thirty-floor elevator ride and twenty paces across the lobby later, Elyas was stepping out into the side parking lot of his downtown apartment building. He wasn't clear of the door before he realized something was wrong. The usually well-lit lot was dim, with only one in every ten lamps casting light over the packed space. The sparse lighting cast deep shadows around every car in the lot. His van, its bulky square frame rising above all the cars around it on its half-meter lift kit, was filled with a pale red glow, a sign that his alarm system had detected someone who stayed too close to the vehicle for too long.

If it were just the lights, okay, that may be a power issue. Or if it were just the van alarm, okay, maybe some kid was napping under the lift like last week. But the combination of the two meant something more. Using his 'link, he armed the van's active defenses and ordered his UltraPower to release the safety, all while strolling through the lot like nothing was wrong. He walked slow even though he could see fine, thanks to the cybernetic wonders of ZeissOptics. The ploy worked. He spotted the big front paws of the massive feline form prowling out from the shadows between the cars with plenty of time to prepare his best startled yelp.

The bulky feline form, now revealing the distinctive stripes of a tiger, skirted the edge of one of the few light pools and passed behind the bulk of a troll-modded Harley Scorpion. A man, black hair, auburn beard, and two meters of naked chiseled muscle, stepped out from behind the bike, but remained in its long shadow.

"Where's Lizzy?" the shadow said in a growl.

"Nowhere near here," Elyas replied, though a nervous glance at the van was the real message.

The lithe strut of the black-haired man was a perfect mirror for the prowling steps of his previous form as he crossed through the light and walked toward the van. His head turned only slightly, just enough to catch the light and cast back that reflective cat's-eye glow, ensuring that Elyas knew he was still being watched.

Elyas held still. He tried to seem scared, nervous, and ready to run, but was thankful he had the wind in his favor tonight. He actually caught a whiff of his shapeshifting stalker. The electronic sensors in his nose detected a myriad of pheromonal traces that the software analyzed and then shifted the cartoon thumb gauge in his AR upwards. A positive mood. The mood gauge made him rethink trying to verbally sell the act any further. Instead, he started to slide his hand toward the alarm button on his commlink.

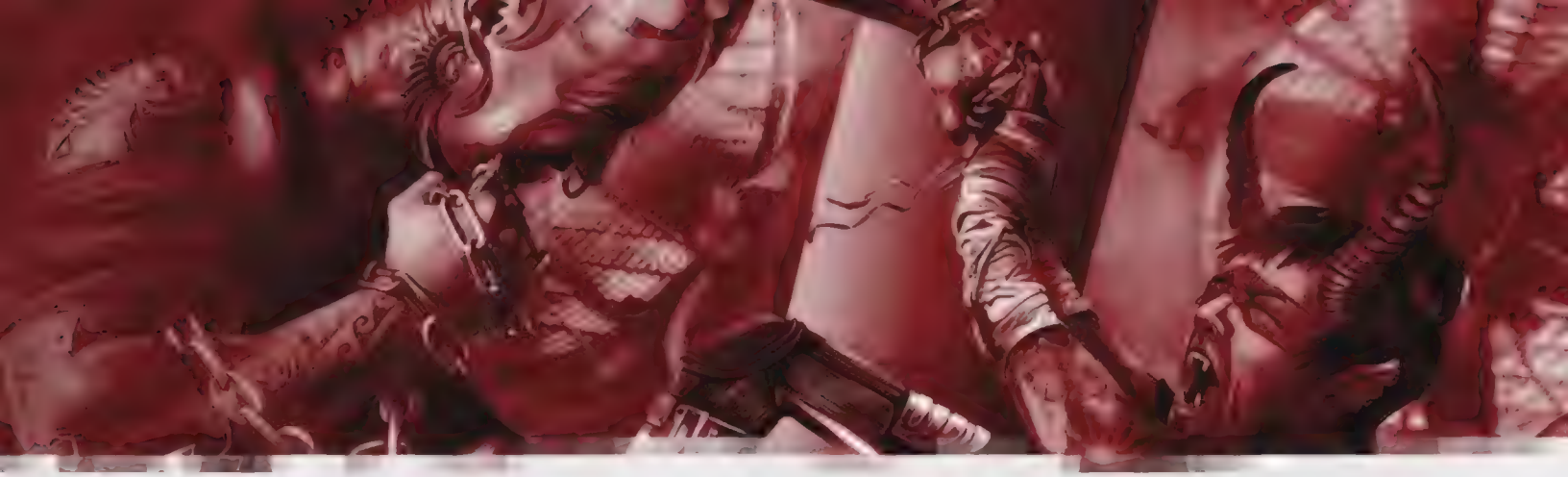
It was just enough.

The black-haired man quickened his pace just enough that when the van's ElectroShockXL defense system engaged, even his catlike reflexes weren't enough to avoid it. Elyas timed it perfectly and raised his left arm to fire a rather bulky dart from his palm directly into the perfectly chiseled gluteus of the twitching shifter. The combo of electricity and Narcoject was more than enough to drop the tigrine shifter, evidenced by the black-haired man's return to his natural tiger shape.

"Always amazing," Elyas thought to himself as he popped open the rear of the van to reveal tightly packed cages. Two were already full of furry masses; the others sat waiting in the midst of harnesses and metal cables.

He pulled out a harness and winch cable from an empty cage then slipped the harness gently onto the sleeping tiger, clipped the cable in place, and reeled in his latest catch.

Seattle was definitely going to be a gold mine, especially if the gold kept falling right into his lap.



BUILDING AN IDENTITY

No matter how hard some may try, all are affected in some way or another by the culture of their nationality, religion, megacorporation, or metatype. Metahumanity is a conglomeration of individuals all reflective, to some degree or another, of the cultures in which they were raised. The cultures of nations and religions have been analyzed and written about for decades. The cultures of megacorporations are ingrained and evident in the actions and expressions of their citizens and defined in their Mission Statements. But the cultures of metatypes—only in existence for 55 to 65 years, with much of that time spent dealing with daily survival rather than developing new cultures—have not had the breadth and depth of examination other cultural identities have had. That is, until now. My name is Garrett Storm, and I bring you my exclusive work: *Building an Identity: Beards, Ears, Tusks, Horns, Norms, Freaks, Furs, Alterations, and Augmentations*.

Let me first make one thing clear: I am in no way, shape, or form prejudiced in favor for or against any of the metatypes that have arisen in the past sixty-five years. My personal philosophy is one of acceptance based on the individual, not the mass, for we are all flesh (well, most of us are mostly flesh), and we succumb to the weaknesses of that flesh, especially when in a group of our peers whom we feel, consciously or subconsciously, the need to impress.

Let me also mention that within every culture exists a counterculture, a group that feels their cultural identity is a trap, a chain, a sham, or whatever other term they want to use, and they feel the need to go against the grain. What is rarely realized by any counterculturalist is that they are simply a different side of the same coin. They defy their primary culture in often-standard ways and create a subculture. It remains full of people with a similar past and shared culture, but now they are united by their desire to go against the grain. Within each cultural analysis we'll take a look at these groups too, because while they may be smaller groups, they are still places for members of each metatype to congregate and define themselves—though you might not want to mention that to them.

WORLD POPULATION BREAKDOWN: 2076

Human: 39%
Ork: 22%
Elf: 15%
Dwarf: 14%
Troll: 5%
Other: 5%

BEARDS: DWARFS

Though I dislike opening with a bad pun, it fit best here. Dwarfs are, by far, the most overlooked metatype of this new age. They are stoic, silent, and strong-willed as a culture, and even the ever-present overbearing indoctrinations of the megacorporations have not reshaped the minds of the dwarfs who work within their ranks. It is that strength of will (not a weakness as some have said) that defines why the dwarfs are the only metatype that has not carved out their own nation. They have not felt the need to congregate and exert their will in a single place but have instead maintained a sense of unity even while separated by books, borders, and bottom lines.

But what does that sense of unity mean to them? Well, it means that dwarfs, no matter where they fall in a nation, corporation, or religion, will usually side with, and prefer to deal with, other dwarfs before anyone else, even non-dwarfs within their parent culture. It is not a matter of racism or even a sense of superiority, but instead a sense of steadiness and understanding that they all share. When working with their own, they know what to expect, they know they will be dealt with according to a particular set of cultural norms, and they know that when the deal is made or the argument is done, it will stay that way. Within dwarven culture, a deal is a deal.

Now, I know I mentioned a lack of a nation, but what the dwarfs have instead is a world. Thanks to a global Matrix and its astral equivalent, dwarfs aren't limited by borders for their culture. They are both technologically and magically savvy. Traits that, along with their steady and willful nature, give them ways to connect over great distances. The contacts list on a dwarf's commlink is often its largest datafile and full of connections to other dwarfs, many of whom the owner may have only met once. Or they may never have met and just got a name passed to them by a friend. This connectivity brings together nearly three-quarters of all the dwarfs in the world (with approximately a fifth of the missing members being a *pumilionis* metavarient). Some of the connections may be negative, such as a note pointing out a dwarf is untrustworthy or has failed to hold to an agreed deal, but through small degrees of separation, —usually less than three, never more than six—a dwarf in the larger group can be connected to another dwarf.

One of the most significant disadvantages to their insular and well-connected nature is it feeds into the conspiracy-esque view of dwarfs as hoarders of wealth. Dwarf-owned shops, especially those in less well-to-do neighborhoods, are frequently targeted by the dim masses in search of dwarven gold. The urban legend of well-connected dwarfs who operate as go-betweens for illicit corporate operations and keep certain valuables, such as credsticks and electronic stock certificates, has only helped fuel these rumors. Especially when these hidden wealth caches are discovered.

A note on the metavarients: Due to local cultural variation, and isolation, most members of the dwarf metavarients (the koborokuru, haruman, menehune, and gnome), are not considered part of the dwarven culture as a whole. These small populations are too often defined by themselves and have not, as a whole, been integrated into the worldwide culture of their more populous kin.

The dwarven counterculture is an interesting group, mostly created by outcasts and non-conformists (a rarity indeed among dwarfs) in a similar way to their kin, but they break the social standards of the broader culture. These individuals often allow their sphere of in-

fluence to include non-dwarfs, and they take far more liberties with the way they handle deals and social interactions. These are usually the primary reasons for their exile from their parent culture. Many do it out of a sense of brotherhood built up on the streets or through the influence of other cultures that are more open with their friendships, most often during the intense, trying events that occur when one is expelled from her parent megacorporation.

Over time, many see the benefit of the mainstream dwarven culture. This is usually caused by a lesson learned the hard way about trusting those who are not trustworthy or those who are willing to go back on a deal. When a dwarf decides to work their way back into the good graces of their brethren, it is not easy. First, it's hard for most dwarfs to admit they were wrong (stubbornness goes with their willfulness), and second, it's hard for any dwarf to trust someone who has lived outside the culture of dwarven trust. More often than not, dwarfs who have strayed outside the tightly-knit, tradition-bound mainstream community are considered no different than any other metatype.

GREAT DUCHY OF WESTRHINE-LUXEMBOURG (AGS)

While dwarfs do not have their own country, this is perhaps as close as they get. It's an unpleasant result of the early policies on metahumans in this region. Much like the trolls and the elves, the dwarfs needed a place to call their own and find strength in numbers against unfriendly politics, so they grouped here. When the Allied German States formed, they were broad-minded enough to include the Duchy as an "associate member," and they continue that connection to this day. They also are an important stop on the European Grand Tour, thanks to the social nature of the area's rulers. That aside, though, the dwarfs of the Duchy are quite similar to their worldwide kin; they are simply physically closer to many of the dwarfs they know.

HOW DWARFS FIT INTO SOCIETY

Very easily, just like small spaces. Sorry, I couldn't resist, even though I know every dwarf reading this has heard the joke a thousand times. The dwarfs of the world don't "fit" into society; they are simply part of it. Though mocked by the small-minded and sometimes made to play the fool, little people have been around all through the Fifth World and into the Sixth. They often lived slightly outside society, but they weren't ostracized. As dwarfs arose, they simply became larger in number, more steadfast in their desire for equality, and they blended right into a world that, while not fully accepting,

GAME INFORMATION

The collective networking of dwarfs translates into game terms rather simply. Dwarfs are exceptionally well connected when they function within the boundaries and mores of their metatypical culture. When dealing with other dwarfs, they gain a +2 modifier to their Social limit, including checks for Availability when looking for gear. This modifier only applies to interactions between dwarfs and does not affect interactions in which one party knows the other is working with, or for the benefit of, a non-dwarf. The modifier also goes away if the dwarf doesn't act in accordance to mainstream dwarven social customs or is exiled from the larger dwarven culture—meaning you can't be obvious about being a shadowrunner. Word travels fast in their culture, and they are quick to ostracize those who violate their mores. If a dwarf is known to flaunt these traditions, the modifier becomes –1 when dealing with other dwarfs, except for fellow exiles. The boost in credibility that comes with being a fellow exile increases characters' Social limits by 3 when dealing with other outsiders.

CHARACTERS AND DWARF CULTURE

What does all this culture talk mean for your character? Simply put, either you're in, or you're out. It's a decision to figure out with your gamemaster, and when you come to a decision, you have to stick with it. One of the hardest things about being part of the dwarven culture and being a shadowrunner is that the two things don't blend well. Dwarfs don't take kindly to shadowrunning dwarfs or law-breaking dwarfs of any kind. Theirs is a culture based around aiding each other and dealing fairly and directly with one another. In their eyes, any dwarf who has to resort to living on the wrong side of the law is choosing to refuse the help his brethren would have offered along the way. And everyone knows how shady the lives of runners are, even if most have learned it from a corporate-sponsored trid show. Truthfully, most dwarfs know that runners are people too, but they just don't want to bring that risky element into their stable cultural philosophy.

As a character, are you going to try to balance on the edge of dwarven and shadow culture? Separating your running life from your dwarven life, refusing to use your dwarven connections, even for the most trusted of non-dwarven teammates, no matter the cost? Or maybe you'll go totally counterculture and build your contacts and relationships based on trust and friendship, instead of height and beardiness, even going so far as to avoid other dwarfs altogether. You could also be looking for the roleplaying challenge of finally coming around and trying to get back into the dwarven culture but facing the choices of your past. Or maybe you're on the other side of that slope and have slipped into the shadows and now use your dwarven connections to benefit you and your team, but then get to see dwarven culture slowly, or suddenly, shut you out.

at least was used to seeing and dealing with little people. That made the battle for acceptance easier than it is for orks and trolls (it helps that their appearance didn't frequently feature in horror flatvids—one Irish-accented exception aside). Dwarfs have problems similar to trolls fitting into a society not built to their size (though the problem is not as extreme for them), but they have one significant advantage—they are less likely to crush or destroy the things that don't fit them.

Then there is the fact that stereotypes sometimes work in their favor. The stereotype of trolls as brutal forces of violence makes people shy away; by contrast, the stereotype that dwarfs are the best technicians in the world provides them with many opportunities, as everyone always asks dwarfs to fix something for them. This has helped many of them grow strong, independent operations, such as repair shops and custom arms manufacturers, often using only their face, while the skilled labor is actually done by others.

EARS: ELVES

No other metahuman culture has had the obvious world-changing effects as that of the elves. Three nations, isolated neighborhoods in almost every major sprawl, personalities acting as a primary face or voice for almost every major world power, and even with all of that they have still built a culture full of humility and founded on understanding of their fellow metahumans.

Somewhere in the preceding paragraph I was a bit untruthful, or at least skewed the truth a little. And that is the way of elven culture.

Known for their grace and beauty, elves have enthralled the masses with their charm and pissed them off with their arrogance. Their slightly-taller-than-human stature, usually with a lean and muscular frame (or so the stereotypes go), narrow facial features, almond-shaped eyes, and silky hair have filled the airwaves since the earliest days of UGE. They are usually loved or loathed, but they rarely feel the need to acknowledge either emotion when it is not expressed by another of their kin. They use the natural grace and beauty they were given to create an image of trust, while stretching the truth and mastering the art of public relations with their charm. Their ability to spin and skew truths is only part of what defines elves; their isolationist mentality is the second half of their cultural identity.

Elves rarely find the company of anyone other than elves to be pleasant, and when it comes to heroes and idols, you are not likely to find a young elven girl or boy with virtuwallpaper of anyone other than an elf on their bedroom wall. This preference and reverence for their own kin has led to elves isolating themselves out of a sense of superiority. Whether it be their own tribe within the NAN, their own nations behind veils of secrecy both figurative and literal, or a neighborhood within a sprawl that is ninety-nine percent theirs, elves find a way to separate themselves.

The elven cultures of the world have developed many similar beliefs and ideals, no matter where they are situated. A respect for age and wisdom is present in every elven culture I've observed or studied. No matter how bright a youth may seem, they garner very little respect within the elven culture until they have gained some years of experience to go with their smarts. Second, in some form, art is always appreciated. Whether it's the cultivation of a specific artistic talent, the appreciation for the talents of others, or even the admiration of the art of nature, elves as a whole show a strong connection to aesthetics. A third commonality is the concept of the Wheel of Life. Most elves study and learn the Path of the Wheel and the various courses one can take within their life. Some narrowly walk a single path, seeking only to be the best in that one area. Others seek to walk as many paths in life as they can, though they always desire to gain at least a minimal level of mastery in an aspect before moving on to the next. This belief structure isn't just about learning and walking the paths; it is often tied to arcane rituals that wipe the learnings of a path from the mind. This mental shield stays in place until the next Wheel mastery occurs, and when it is broken it allows the follower to see the differences in the paths, not as they go through them but in retrospect. This religious practice has been growing steadily, though certain aspects of modern society sometimes hinder the practice. Augmentations damage the Essence of the beings, sometimes making future paths impossible to follow, while a global world and sometimes difficult trials can leave foes behind who do not understand the varied journey a traveler of the paths takes. These foes do not comprehend that when a different path is taken, all memory of the previous is gone, making the follower something akin to a new person. This can cause confusion when a rival they do not remember from a previous path lashes out at them.

As the elves are often seen as the most attractive of the metatypes (though many orks and trolls would disagree with this characterization), their fashion trends tend to be the most frequently copied. One such style, long flowing straight hair, is more than just a trend. That hair is a source of pride among elves, and those who wear it best gain a certain level of prestige. This vanity is both a blessing and a curse as elves, both male and female, suffer from frequent eating disorders and exercise addictions in order to maintain their image. This, and the common "elven prize" phenomenon, push many elven youth, and some full grown adults, to an unhealthy brink as they try to be what everyone else wants.

But not everything among the elves is about beauty and long, flowing hair. Elven counterculture is strong and possesses an icon recognizable around the world. The neon-green "A" with a circle through it is known in sprawls

around the world as the tag for the Ancients, the largest elven gang in the world. These brash and wild youngsters define the fast-living, honor-the-strong, live-for-the-moment counterculture of elven society. Though art may still gain some praise in these particular elven circles, it's usually graffiti, a bike's paint-job, or a driver who is an artist behind the wheel. The Ancients represent the portion of the elven counterculture that ignores the elven convention that wisdom and age should lead and be honored. They don't, however, do anything to change the elven superiority complex. The Ancients think of themselves as better than other gangs not just because they can outgun, out-ride, out-cast, and outclass any other gang; they think they are better because they are elves.

Deeper into the counterculture, and truly rare, are members of the elven metatype that sometimes go completely against the culture that raised them. Their streak of independence means a disregard for art and disdain for artistic endeavors, a high value in friendships with all metatypes, and an opinion that experience and age does not grant wisdom, as life and the world are always changing. The wisdom of a past age is not wisdom in the modern world, and so much has changed, even since the Awakening, that they believe all supposed knowledge from the past must be questioned. These rebels can often be identified by their short hair (another act of counterculture rebellion) and scars marring their "perfect" form. Their imperfect form is still physically fit; it just has scars amid the muscles.

TÍR NA NÓG

In the ultimate expression of isolationism, the nation of Tír na nÓg, well known to be a nation founded and controlled by elves, hides behind the Veil, its mystical shield. Though issues have been reported with it, the Veil still remains, and the elves are still firmly in control of the nation. They are not the only ones who live in what was once Ireland and not every elf in the nÓg is royalty, but even the lowliest of elves is still more respected among their kin than the highest of anyone else.

TÍR TAIRNGIRE

For decades the nation of Tír Tairngire was in isolation. They held off aggression from the south, lived surrounded by the cold neutrality of the NAN on the north and east, and did most of their trading through the docks of Seattle, a sprawl that existed in its own kind of isolation. The elves of this nation prospered, especially their princes, and did so while shaping the world's view of their nation as prosperous, even as discontent grew within. Even now that the borders are more open, the spinning of the truth by elven princes and business executives continues. Though their Council of Princes is not the elven island of supremacy it once was, the unquestioned corporate power in the nation, Telestrian Industries, remains firmly elven.

ZULU NATION (AZANIAN CONFEDERATION)

Africa makes the strong stronger and breaks the weak. Such is true of the elves of the Zulu Nation. Though most famous for the great dragon Mujaji and the Wakyambi metavariant of elves that come from the region, the Zulu Nation has been an elven stronghold (as well as a sapient stronghold) since its creation. The elves of this nation hold to much of the tribal culture of the Zulu, which also values artistic skill as well as age and wisdom, and had a strong parallel for the Paths even before the Awakening—they simply didn't live long enough to walk many. Africa is a harsh home.

DUCHY OF POMORYA (AGS)

The elven nation of the Allied German States, the Duchy of Pomorya has been around since 2030, making it older than both of the Tírs. They follow an aristocratic form of government, and though age is not the main factor, true power is sometimes not in the government officials but in the people who back them. Here, it's three old houses that may put a young face forward, but the power and direction still comes from those older and wiser who sit behind the family banners.

HOW ELVES FIT INTO SOCIETY

They don't have to fit into society. Society adapts to them. Let 's take the new season of *Date or Dump*, which features Keelie, the elf girl next door, who works behind the counter at McHugh's and thinks human boys are cute and elf guys are all snobs. Seems pretty acclimated, right? But remember, it's entertainment. How many teenage human boys dream of an accessible elven girl who prefers humans? She's playing a role, despite the show's "reality" label. Scratch at most elves who seem to have adapted to human culture, and you'll find a similar level of artificiality.

Elves connect with elves and do elven work. They don't work regular jobs to fit in, they don't join bands because their friends did, and they don't do menial labor because it's their only option. Elves work behind reception desks, host trideo shows, anchor the news, work for PR firms, act as the face of ad campaigns, sit first chair for the orchestra, and do a host of other things that include nothing but using their charm, grace, and presence to make others feel comfortable or buy something. Do I exaggerate? Yeah, a little. There are elves at the bottom of the ladder, just like with any other metatype. But the pressure they feel to be something else, and the guilt they feel for failing their heritage, can be considerable. The funny thing is, even when they are shoveling drek for a living, they still carry that annoying air of superiority.

Now, what about in elven nations, you ask? Someone's gotta be at the bottom there, right? That's why

they allow at least some of the other metahuman races to be around. Grunt work, whether civilian or military, is full of orks and trolls. More technical work is filled by dwarfs and humans. The bosses—those are the elves.

CHARACTERS AND ELF CULTURE

To be an elf is to be better than everyone else, or at least to be raised with that view. Elves, whether they grow up in a corporation or on the street, congregate together with their own and look down their noses at everyone else. But while they do this, they don't create the enmity most would expect. Their natural charm shines through their disdaining glares, and those around them often buy into the belief that the elves really are better than them. Being an elf means playing with a chip on your shoulder and a smile on your face. Working with the other metatypes is fine, but when it comes to social time, it's generally preferable to be with those who deserve to be in your presence. Elves tend to live among elves and even have their bolt holes among elves, often making it hard to take others with them since they'll stand out.

For those who seek to go against the grain, they find the road often easy—but the ease is really a slippery slope. They make friends with their natural charm, they're often deferred to when charm is called for, and they still get that same feeling of being superior without acting like a stuck-up drekhead. The problem is, they still have pointy ears and almond-shaped eyes, and there are those who, no matter how well the elves sell their goodness, hate them, and most of those people will be hanging out in the same countercultural locations. Elves become a target, a rather easy-to-spot one at that, and some of their "friends" are going to stay quiet when the local ork gang wants to have a "word." This means playing an elf in the counterculture may be a trying experience for a person expecting their friends to back them up.

TUSKS: ORKS

Orks have the highest birth rate but shortest natural lifespan of any metahuman race. Add an over-representative number of orks performing for physically taxing jobs and a cultural propensity for confrontation to this biological brevity and you'll find a difficult window within which to make meaningful change or even to develop a lasting cultural identity of one's own. For the bulk of the past fifty-five years, orks have been simply trying to exist in a world where they don't have the time to develop a culture because they have to put so much effort into just living. Thus far they have a culture of *carpe diem*, or more accurately *ad diem vivunt*: live for the day.

As the second-most populous metatype on the planet (behind humans) with a growing youth population working alongside the recent discovery of Or'zet and rise in popularity of orxploitation music and films, an emerging culture for orks has strengthened and penetrated the mainstream. But it is not a culture that will make much of the world happy. The popular lyrics of orxploitation goddess Orxanne—"live fast, die young, best behind a smoking gun"—are not the counterculture rap one would expect, but instead the growing cultural norm for a metatype that is starting to find its stride and possibly turning some of its simmering discontent outward. It is most interesting to me when looking at this blossoming culture that its greatest proponents, the megacorporations behind orxploitation, are fueling the fires of revolution. While the great powers of the world will not be brought down by an uprising of enraged orks, they could risk losing a portion of their heavy labor force if said workers were to decide they wanted a nation.

Though this trend is building with the youth, there is still an interesting cultural trait that has been developed by the old and young alike, and that is the power of their women. From their youngest days orks are brought up in a mostly matriarchal household. The males are absent for a variety of reasons. One significant reason is that over half of all male orks are incarcerated at least once before their sixteenth birthday (justice systems tend to treat them in a harshly punitive fashion)), and three times more orks are in prison than attending college at any one time. The remaining orks are usually off working at some long-hour, heavy-labor job, leaving the females at home to ensure the kids are raised right (though "kept in line" is probably a better term). This behavior leads orks to have a remarkable amount of respect for females of all metatypes, especially ork women. Hassle a female ork in the presence of her male kin, whether they know her or not, and expect some serious ork muscle to be coming your way.

This leads me to another trend in ork culture: the pack mentality. Some have made the derogatory connection between the robustus tendency towards multiple births and that of dogs and litter births, but this similarity is truly more of a positive. Orks are rarely alone as they grow up and thus develop a strong pack mentality. Since more orks grow up on the street than in a corporate enclave or upper-crust neighborhood, they are wild and often in need of protection, and thus behave similarly to a wolf pack. They protect their own; "blood and kin outrank all, but tusks first" is a common credo of the orks. They'll take up arms nine times out of ten in defense of others of their kind if they feel they're being harassed or wronged for being an ork, and sometimes they don't even need that deep of a justification. If an ork gets in a tussle and other orks are around, expect a mass melee.

This leads me to another big deal in ork culture: honor. Not like "never stab a guy in the back"-type of honor; it's more like being able to take care of your kin, your kind, and yourself. Sometimes an ork will call off his fellows tusk-bearers in order to prove himself, and other orks' honor this in most cases. Cheating on the part of a foe may get them a win over the ork who waved the others off, but after the fight, the ork friends of the victim will gang up and beat the cheater down for this new offense. Orkish life tends to be violent.

As for the counterculture of the orks, it has a blessedly simple goal these days: Fit in. While the growing culture of the younger generation is pushing away from the rest of society, the elder generation and countercultural youth seek to integrate into society at large. Whether it be the society of a corporation or a nation, or just an effort to integrate into the general human society, these orks work to improve the image of ork-kind. Many even go as far as cosmetic surgeries to look less orkish. This is extremely popular in the more traditional Japanacorps, where the surgeries are covered under the corporation's health plan. Especially MCT's, but *especially* Renraku's. While mainstream orks deride these others as self-hating sell-outs, this blending in is often promoted with subtle messages put out by shows like *Buddies* and *Welcome High,* where ork characters with remarkably human features fill the role of "best bud" or "heart of the football team." Horizon's *Age of Syn* will be premiering with Dagger Taggit at the helm, fresh off his latest dental procedure to reduce the size of his tusks, playing Syn, a heavily cybered ork freed from the shackles of his violent culture to act as a cop during the Earth's interstellar evacuation.

ORK UNDERGROUND, SEATTLE, UCAS

Though of recent political legitimacy and not only for orks, this entity is the orks' newest triumph as they work to build their identity as more than brutes and laborers. But the truth is, they need to become more than that, and fast. Orks in the Underground are already losing this battle as the official name for the district is determined, and it's leaning toward just The Underground, or Undercity, or even Deep Seattle. The word "ork" has been written out of every likely option. With the current direction of their societal aims, orks are not a political force of change, and thus are unlikely to change the current direction. Perhaps the best they can hope for is to be leading players in a revolution, and then all of the Emerald City can become Orkland. That sort of action is more natural for them than playing politics.

BLACK FOREST TROLL REPUBLIC (AGS)

Orks are not the dominant metatype here as the name implies, but they are a large, and rapidly growing, portion of the population. This growth, combined with the rise of ork culture and the long history of counterculture and anarchist movements within the AGS, means that the Black Forest Troll Republic could very well turn into the Black Forest Ork Republic if the orks get organized and political. Luckily for the trolls, those are not two of the orks' strongest suits, but if outside forces want a change or even just a little civil unrest, the orks would be great internal antagonists.

CHARACTERS AND ORK CULTURE

Being an ork is about making a choice about which ork you want to be, or accepting the role you've been stuffed into. Society doesn't care how big you are. Yes, the locals may run or avoid looking at you as you intimidate them, but no one gives a devil rat's hoop about you, or they'll all slap the PanicButton to get you chased off by the local tin star. This means you can play the role and act the ignorant brute (or maybe it's not an act) or you can work to elevate yourself. Stop fighting on the street corners, hanging at the local temp agency to snag some day-laborer work, or opting for a beatdown to get into the local gang. Instead, step up alongside your fellow orks to be the bigger metahuman, get together to demand a better wage, or look to those tusked brothers, your pack of orks, instead of the local gangers for a sense of meaning, home, and family.

Orks live a life that they know is going to be too short, but they fight to make it meaningful in the little time they have.

KINGDOMS OF NIGERIA

Many of the tribes within this region, in particular the Yoruba and Igbo, have large ork populations, and the Igbo are led by an ork. Fighting in these regions is common (and has been for hundreds, if not thousands, of years) and though it may be a small part of the ork culture in the region, it is not the greater part. This is one area of the world in which the orks have developed a stronger culture based on older local traditions.

HOW ORKS FIT INTO SOCIETY

Orks fit into society in two very different ways: by groveling at its feet or by pushing others out of their way. These are two very different sides of the same coin, a coin that flips and leaves orks in one of two predicaments. For many orks resources are hard to come by, but physical labor is relatively easy. Since the work is easy for them, companies don't see a reason to pay orks well for it. This, combined with their numbers and almost universal lack of white-collar employment, leaves a large labor pool that is forced to work cheaply.

On the other side of the coin you have the orks who live in the wilder edges of society where they can use their bulk and physical intensity to push others around. They find their way to the top of the heap by being the strongest. Some would expect trolls to take this spot, but a solitary troll (which is their preferred lifestyle) is no match for a pack of orks. Packs that, incidentally, are growing in size and number at an astonishing rate. Latest figures present the world population of orks currently at twenty-two percent, but projections show that number to reach and possibly to exceed thirty percent by 2080. Those growth numbers will make it easier for future generations of orks to push their way into the aspect of society where they may be required to grovel, but at least they stand less of a chance of having their faces bashed in.

HORNS: TROLLS

When I hear people say trolls are uncultured, I don't hear it as the derogatory slight they are often intending. Instead, I hear that trolls, as a metatype, lack a culture. That truth is hard to deny. As the least numerous of the metatypes and the most disproportionate from the original model, they struggle to find a place just to fit in, let alone develop a culture. If anything, segregation, struggle, strife, and separation are the foundations of the culture they have managed to develop in most areas.

There is one place in the world that trolls have actually made a home of: the Schwarzwald. The Black Forest Troll Republic, in the southern region of the Allied German States and bordered by the Rhine River and Switzerland, is its own nation, but its political stance reflects the anger and separatist mentality that so often comes from the individuals. Within the nation they have only recently managed to settle down enough to try to deal reasonably with the rest of the AGS and surrounding nations. Many claim this is due to a lack of political skill, but if trolls lack political skill, it's because they haven't had enough political experience to develop it. Plus, they have a certain intolerance for the falsities that are perpetrated in the halls of government on a daily basis. Yes, a few trolls have done well for themselves, such as former UCAS vice-presidential candidate Gary Grey, but most are too poor to reshape their surroundings to fit them and thus must instead try and fit into a world that is not made for their stature, which is very difficult, bordering on the impossible. Trolls have, in some ways, been pushed to the edges of society, but they've also done some walking there all on their own. When the world does not fit you, literally and figuratively, and you do not have the means to change the world, you move on and keep looking for a place that works.

As megacorporations rose and arcologies became the norm for corporate populations, massive numbers of homes and structures were abandoned. While those arcologies were never built with trolls in mind, no one was around to prevent the trolls from doing a little remodeling to those abandoned structures. Barrens, warrens, impoverished zones, and containment zones are far more likely than corporate housing, suburbia, and arcologies to have housing that has been adjusted for a troll. Trolls live along the outskirts of metahumanity because that's where they can find the most legroom.

So what does this mean for a counterculture? Nothing. You cannot swim against a current that doesn't exist. The closest thing would be trying to fit in, and that's a dangerous route. Some troll girls have starved themselves and had their horns cut off and shaved down along with their dermal deposits in an effort to look more human. Trying to blend into the world is not easy, whether it means taking a security job where one would expect to see a troll or simply being acutely aware of all the places where adjustments have to be made and not making a fuss over it.

In an interesting intellectual note, trolls have the highest literacy rate percentage of any metatype. Some racially biased individuals will claim this is some misuse of statistics based on the small population of trolls versus other metatypes, but that just shows they don't know how rates work. The explanation for this is buried in the rubble and cast-off detritus of earlier societies. Trolls live in the ruins of our last information age, when information was written, not coded. Paper books from old libraries, cast-off papers, and forgotten letters fill the spaces where trolls have made their homes. And in their free time, they read. Many trolls can even read and decipher cursive, which died with my grandfather's generation, and many use calligraphy as an artistic expression. This "secret code," along with their unique racial trait of horns, has opened an avenue of expression all their own. The ancient art of scrimshaw, the carving of bone, is practiced alongside real-ink tattooing to make the horns and skin of many trolls into works of art. So countercultural trolls, rather than trying to appear more human, endeavor to be fully beautiful trolls.

BLACK FOREST TROLL REPUBLIC (AGS)

Though this was mentioned with the orks, I'll briefly cover it here as a success story for the trolls. They are one of the most—who am I kidding, *the* most—unorthodox and difficult regions of the AGS to deal with, and the trolls have reveled in that status for years. Though modifying their government structure in 2073 to a Republic from a Kingdom may seem politically savvy, it was far more an act of survival than political acumen. They had lost their king, they needed a leader, and it was easier to elect one than to try to figure out, or argue over, who is next in line for the throne. This political shift has lead to endless jockeying since and the trolls

of the Trollrepublik Schwarzwald are improving their political skills, though most still prefer to play the uncouth brutes and leave the scheming to Pomorya.

HOW TROLLS FIT INTO SOCIETY

They don't. It is that simple. Society may tolerate them, and you'll see some working as janitors, dock workers, or security goons, but for the most part trolls exist on the edge, or even completely outside, of the world's societies. A few exceptional individuals have made it up the social ladder, but that is definitely the exception rather than the rule. Fitting in anywhere is a daily struggle that constantly reminds trolls of their outsider status.

When they have a chance to set up their own society, it is usually chaotic and the principle of might makes right tends to play a large role in how their society functions. This is not to say that their society is more violent than other societies, as most encounters are more about the various parties involved sizing each other up rather than engaging in actual combat.

CHARACTERS AND TROLL CULTURE

Playing the big dumb troll is typical, but so is playing the smart troll. Being a troll isn't really about intelligence—it's about isolation. Try to play up the fact that you really don't fit into other people's vehicles and that the world just isn't built for you. Depression would be common, along with anger at the world for not fitting and being too small or delicate for you. One thing you can do when playing a troll is ask the gamemaster not to give you the oversized glass of soybeer; instead tell him you'd rather it was made a point that you're forced to drink regular-size glasses, which look like kids' cups in your hands, and cost you a fortune to drink enough.

Gamemasters, remember the world doesn't adjust for the large-and-ungainly five percent, unless they have money. Which is not the case for most trolls.

NORMS: HUMANS

Though there is no single human culture, there is a sense of normality for those of the most abundant metatype. Their abundance and their presence during the down-cycle of magic gives them a sense of unity in their humanity that has only grown with the rise of the megacorporations and decline of national governments. Humans have spent thousands of years with other cultures separating themselves from one another along various lines, be they religious, national, or tribal. The rise of megacorporations, along with their individual corporate cultures, only gives humans more ideals with which to drive wedges between themselves. But this mass of humanity is the definition of their culture. They create cultures and sub-cultures, and then seek those that fit them best. Sometimes they even change cultures several times in their lifetime.

So what is their counterculture? Anything that goes against the beliefs of the individual's previous culture or the greater culture of their region. That means it can be very different for different people and when moving from one area to another, one's previous counterculture lifestyle could become culturally acceptable. Humans find a way to make themselves fit a culture; failing that, they find a way to make the culture fit them.

HOW HUMANS FIT INTO SOCIETY

By setting the ground rules and blending in. It isn't really a matter of fitting in for them, it's far more a matter of trying to avoid being blamed when non-humans don't. Humanity had set the rules of societies for millennia. In fact, many societies rose and fell over the years, and none of those changed in a day. Changes take time and support. Since humans are still around, they still have support for their various sub-cultures. There is not just one culture, and they are all constantly shifting. Increased acceptance of other metatypes, agitation from younger generations (and resistance from older generations), and other forces help keep the changes moving.

On the other side of the coin, in places where the other metatypes set the rules, humans try to blend in. Most who have chosen to stay in the places where other metatypes have set up governments or societies were either well aware of their position as a second-class citizen, or they were just too stubborn to move and figured they could live out the rest of their years quietly. Most of the latter died at some point in the last sixty years, but the former have stayed in place and often reproduced. Their place in the society has changed because of this, and many face problems they were ill prepared for after so many years of being a quiet part of the majority. Those problems include kids—more accurately, unruly teenagers—who are all about bucking the system. They see their parents as being oppressed and weak, and they feel the need to speak out, join underground groups, and possibly even actively rebel against their society. But the trouble hits the parents far harder than it hits the youth. Parents are ostracized, and sometimes deported, for the actions of their children.

CHARACTERS AND HUMAN CULTURE

To be human is to be free to select elements from the myriad of real-world background ideas or to work with the gamemaster and create something entirely new. They can be a part of a majority human society, or they can be integrated into other metatypes' societies through some twist of fate, feeling acceptance from those close to them but shunning others who don't know them. They can be raised in a world of hatred by the Humanis Policlub, but then turn to kindness when they realize the destructive nature of that organization and its beliefs. They can be a true patriot, a corporate yes-man, a reclusive shaman, or anything else. Let your imagination run wild!

Remember that being human means being looked at by everyone else as the "norm"—for better and for worse. Humans have it all, in the eyes of the other metatypes, and get treated special everywhere but the few nations were the other metahumans were the founding force. Some humans feel this is the way it should be, and that they should be treated a little differently because they are the most abundant. Others feel that everyone should be treated equal and that humans shouldn't get special treatment, numbers be damned. People have contentious debates about how to best integrate societies, what the pace of integration should be, and how metatypes should get along. These are variants of arguments that have been going on for ages, and they are not likely to end soon.

When building a human character, it's good to decide where they stand in all this and what their exposure to other metatypes has been. Many humans have very limited experience with trolls, while SURGEd people, metavariants, and sapient critters are even more rare. So how will the character react when they run into a three-meter-long talking snake? And how will they move beyond that first impression, and what kind of relationship will they attempt to build?

FREAKS: CHANGELINGS

The still-developing culture of the changelings is an interesting area of study. Anthropologists are able to observe the breaking away of a sect of a culture in real time as opposed to making guesswork on what happened from writings or stories. Changelings today usually go one of two ways, depending on the severity of their SURGE expression. Those who have been greatly changed are what I'd rather focus on, as they are the ones who are developing a new culture for themselves and their kind. Those whose expressions are minor often simply stick within their original culture and accept their small differences as simply a part of who they are, or they hide them in order to fit in. These same individuals are also the ones who show up at changeling gatherings and then try to fit in because they "know what it's like," only to find themselves drummed out or ignored. Because in truth, they *don't* know what it's like.

The changeling culture is one of acceptance for their own kind and the expansive variations of their expressions, along with a reluctance to take part in the formalized culture of anyone else. They revel in their nature, and many have been trying to create changeling-only communities with varying levels of success due to the limited number of individuals with extensive expressions. Within these areas, and within the culture of the changelings themselves, is a world of accepting difference and expressing one's self, often through art or stage performance. The revitalization of small portions of slum communities has become a calling card for changeling communities. As a group and as a culture, they help each other out, and every structure is customized for the changeling who will live there. They even work together to remodel homes for those who move in or when they have children who display different traits. The areas have also attracted many metavariants who also don't feel at home in the rest of the world. Acceptance is universal for the altered. That acceptance is limited, though, as they have very little tolerance for any normal human (or "norman," as they call them) who wants to live among them, feeling they are simply being used to boost the norman's countercultural cred, or that they are being pitied as "freaks."

The counterculture of changelings is about not accepting changes, but rather trying to erase them in an effort to fit in. They may attempt self-mutilation to get back to normal, they may cover up changes and act as if they don't exist, or they may try to become a mainstream success in some field or another, giving something for the normans to condescendingly admire as an "inspiration." For changelings, joining the culture of the world at large is their counterculture.

CHARACTERS AND CHANGELING CULTURE

Changelings are outsiders by nature. They don't want to be part of the normal society because they are special. They were pushed to the outskirts and found a home there, with others like them who understand them. While the world has had sixty years to adjust to the idea of 2.5 meter trolls, burly orks, stout dwarfs, and graceful elves (and haven't gotten it perfect yet), they have had only a little more than a decade to come to grips with beaks, tentacles, frog tongues, and tails. And there are so many fewer changelings than metahumans, no one ever gets a chance for them to be seen everyday and make them seem normal.

A character, even one running the shadows who is a natural outsider, still needs a place to call home with people who understand them. The character can choose whether they are trying to fit in, whether they go back to their neighborhoods, or whether they go the route of the hermit and live alone, away from the world. Roleplaying the difficulties of fitting in when you don't look like anyone near you or even the difficulties of a life where finding someone like you may never happen should weigh heavily on the character. They may be the dreamer who knows that the right one is out there; they may be the shut-in, angry at the world because they can never know whether their present company is there for them as a person or because they want to watch the sideshow; or they could be oblivious, or play oblivious, to the reality of their situation. Being a changeling may seem cool to have the great abilities or nifty stat boosts, but the true advantage is in the character you can play, the chance to play out the role of the outsider on the outside, while struggling to be accepted on the inside.

FURS: SHAPESHIFTERS

The two most important points on the culture of shapeshifters is that, first, they are animals, not metahumans, and second, they are all different animals. These two factors help to define the culture(s) of the different shapeshifter species. Species that could come from anywhere on the planet and therefore could mimic or appear to be millions of different cultures, many of which may never interact with the rest of metahuman culture.

Their culture and upbringing is often more of a reflection of their animal kin's mentality than anything in human culture. Lupine shapeshifters may be loyal to their pack, but their reasoning is one of survival and mutual protection, not necessarily because they are friends or like each other. That loyalty only goes as far as survival. A dolphin shapeshifter may be fun-loving and friendly, but that's because of the world in which they were

raised. Once they are crushed under the oppressive weight of metahumanity's burdensome lifestyle they may not act the same and will change, whether for the better or worse—no one knows until it happens.

There is a unique balance within the culture of the shapeshifters that stems from their position between two worlds. They are too intelligent to live within the bestial world of their parent species, but they are too bestial to live within the rigid societies of metahumanity. They can often live on the outskirts, in the wild areas of metahumanity, and some have even gathered with enough others to develop a community, but most are too far behind the curve in terms of education and understanding, and thus they don't fit in with either world. This fitting in is often difficult for the more predatory species as they don't look at other metahumans the same way regular folks do. Many shapeshifters I've spoken to will actively hunt in the urban sprawls, and this includes putting metahumans on their menu.

Counterculture when it comes to shapeshifters is a controversial and extremely upsetting topic with most of them. Their counterculture is all about forgetting the animal side and embracing the metahuman form. Those who strive to function in this counterculture often fit in better with the metahuman culture at large, but they forget their nature. They pride themselves on how long they have been in their metahuman form and never returned to their natural state. Some even claim that their natural state is metahuman and that changing to a beast is the magic. Though all it takes is a weakened area of mana and the animal comes back out. And if it surprises people who weren't expecting it—well, that's how you get a lot of dead shapeshifters. Including ones with silver bullets lodged in their skulls.

ALTERATIONS AND AUGMENTATIONS

Being different may seem like a choice to many of us. We see them, eyes modded to look like gleaming chrome, legs with reversed knees, a tail, maybe some cyberhands complete with claws, and we think to ourselves, why? What would make someone want to go to that extent to change themselves? But the answer isn't what we think. We think it was a choice, but to those who walk the transhumanist path it isn't a choice, but a need. A feeling within the depths of their souls that they aren't quite right and they need something to be different. For many this starts small, like seeing if that eye-color change is what they needed. Then maybe next is a skin mod, maybe an electro-tat. Could be hair next, then a limb, and another limb, and then a little tweak to the eyes, maybe new ears ... and the changes go on forever.

This isn't how it goes for everyone, only the most extreme. Many people just get a few upgrades, maybe a little cosmetic work while they're in there tweaking the muscles. They accept each change as it comes instead of making each change to fit a bigger picture. Two sides of the same coin. One side implants to alter; the other to augment. Both simply want to be more than what they are, but when it comes to their cultures, they are worlds apart.

ALTERATIONS

The culture of alteration is one of personal evaluation. They want to explore who they seem to be, who they want to be, and who they truly are. This journey of self-exploration is rarely a solo trip, and others will often try to help a friend discover what path they wish to take. Some

CHARACTERS AND SHAPESHIFTER CULTURE

You are an animal. You think in animal terms, and though you may have been around people and learned to speak their language, you are still often confused at the things they do and the way they act. The complexities of many of their interactions and the way they often deceive both themselves and others seems pointless. Why lie? If a female is in estrus and you desire to mate, why do you have to compliment her shoes and buy her drinks or dinner? Why can't you just take her? Maybe after it might be nice to bring her scraps or something in case she's pregnant and of course you'll make sure your offspring are taken care of, but the trappings of civilization and the concept of respecting others' will are difficult to comprehend.

If you desire to play a shapeshifter who has spent more time in the metahuman realm and understands the need for these things, remember that they are now an outcast from their own kind. Both the species from which they originate and other shapeshifters they may meet will treat them as an outsider who is not to be trusted.

When considering interactions, remember the different senses that are present and often heightened for a shapeshifter. Identifying people by smell, being driven from a restaurant, store, or washroom due to the overwhelming odors, trying to block out the cacophony of noise on urban streets, and not understanding why others are so afraid to walk down the alley are all sensory opportunities for your character to define their nature without outright saying it.

Mistrust is the defining feature of the relationship between shapeshifters and metahumans. Many nations still pay bounties for shapeshifters, and every megacorporation out there will slip money from their black-book operations to pay for a live shapeshifter on whom they can run some tests. While shapeshifters may not be educated, they know they are often hunted by metahumans. Revealing their nature is a rare thing and can often be the precursor to their departure from metahuman society.

realize they were born in the wrong body, some simply feel that a few features are off, and some feel that it all needs to change. Whatever the case may be, they can find support for the path they chose to take. Assuming, of course, they can pay for it.

AUGMENTATIONS

The culture of augmentation is one of personal enhancement. People want to be better than the best, to set the next record, to push the next limit. They get together to compete against one another, to look for the next edge, the next new piece that could get them on top of the heap. They then in turn treat everyone like this. They spend so much time comparing themselves to each other or to some barely achievable aspiration that these comparisons stretch out to the world around them. Who's stronger, who's faster, who's a better warrior? It's always about being the alpha in this world.

Now beyond the two sides of that coin—or simply reflections as it spins—is the line of transhumanists. Those who desire to use technology to transition beyond simply metahumanity and transform all into a better, more evolved, form of metahuman. This culture takes parts of both, seeking to make metahumankind better through augmentation and adapting them through alteration to reach their full potential. Transhumanists do not believe they are superior, only more focused on what it is to be metahuman on this massive rock hurtling through space. The evolution of metahumankind through technology is their fundamental ideal, but over time there are those who have accepted a few members of the Awakened community to join, under the idea that they would seek enlightenment through arcana and tour the metaplanes seeking their knowledge.

EVOCULTURE

Though individuals who seek enlightenment or even simple corrections to nature's errors do not have a nation they can call home they at least have a culture to fall back on; EvoCulture. Evo has long been the corporation to go to for anyone and everyone with an idea. Whether you had tusks, a tail, steel hands, or no physical form at all, they were, and still are, willing to take a look. This openness has drawn beings from all walks of life to Evo. The corporation has by far the highest number and percentage of non-standard metahuman citizens and contracted employees of all the Big Ten. They also rank in the top ten for citizenship numbers for non-standard SINs behind only the various Awakened nations.

While EvoCulture is not pure transhumanism, it is strongly influenced by the concepts and ideal of the movement. Metahumanity is not limited anymore. Where once the only sapient beings who existed were humans, now there is a full range of metahumanity, sapient critters, and shapeshifters out in the world who need a place in society, and Evo has worked to cultivate that idea. Yes, profit always plays a part, but Evo earns more profit from Mars research and nanite production (and we know the hit that has taken) than from MetaErgonomics (which usually operates at a one to three percent loss), but yet ME is still a cherished subsidiary and gets millions in PR funds. Evo values those who are different, and EvoCulture celebrates those differences. As long as the customers can help pay for the party.

CHARACTERS AND AUGMENTED CULTURE

Purchasing cyber and bioware is not just about getting those extra dice and edge for your street sam. Every drop of Essence that is lost is a little piece of your character's soul that is gone forever, a little piece of what connects her to the rest of metahumanity slipping off into oblivion for a few wires.

Each piece of obvious ware is a question asked by every passer-by. Just how strong is the arm? How fast? Do you use it to shoot people? Punch them in the brain? Bend iron bars and grab the bank vault gold? The kind of cyberarms and cyberlegs that runners and their ilk use are not conventional replacements for lost limbs; they are extra enhancements, circuitry blended with biology to take the body to new heights. Observers often know this, and they look at those who sport these augmentations with a combination of awe, curiosity, and respect.

And what about that twitch, that jumpiness those enhanced reflexes give you? They make you touchy, on edge, and possibly unable to handle overly stimulating environments. Every piece of ware that goes into your character is a chance to define their behaviors and mannerisms, their little quirks. Enhance those bones with bioware or bone lacing and fear of elevator trips, wooden stairs, and even jumping on floors in older structures may be a genuine quirk.

As for others like you, well, you got the wires to get an edge, and every other person with the same systems has the same edge and more than likely the same mentality. They're looking at you as competition, a rival for the top spot on the shadow roster of the megas. An obstacle that may keep them from being the one hired for that big payday. Even if you're both contracted for the same job, you've got to shine brighter, move faster, and curtail more threats.

But what about the EvoCulture? That's very different. Choosing to be modified is expected, and many modifications aren't offensive or defensive, they're cosmetic. Maybe the cat eyes get you some better night vision and that tail helps walking the balance beam a little better, but they're not in it for the maximum-damage, take-a-beating, dodge-a-bullet kind of wares. Because of this, they'll look at cosmetic mods with a smile and pride, maybe even a little friendly jealousy; but when you start firing lasers from your eye or slashing people with the monoblade at the end of that tail, the frown will start and the anger will surge. Street sams are the antithesis of EvoCulture. They say they accept everyone—cyber, SURGE, meta, sapient, whatever—but they don't go in for the violent stuff.

As for transhumanists, they have their plate full right now trying to deal with cognitive fragmentation disorder (CFD). To one of them you may be a potential source of infection, a head case, or worse, a non-believer. They add their wares to make them ultra-metahuman, the next step, beyond the limits of the metahuman condition.

But CFD is not universally feared by the transhumanists. Some see it as a way to escape the human form. A way to be joined with the greater consciousness. Those that are infected and believe this, may see you as another person who needs to be enlightened.

Choosing to be augmented makes a big difference for your character. Think them all through and let them help to define the character you play, not just the dice that you roll.

A RUN ON THE WILD SIDE

Things started going south right about the time Loogie got stuck in his chair at the meet.

Probably should have taken it as an omen.

I couldn't really blame Johnson: the high-end Downtown restaurant she'd picked out was a great choice. How was she supposed to know that some second-string trog-rap star and his posse of supersized meat slabs would show up half an hour before us and glom up all the extra-large chairs? It's not like those fancy joints keep dozens of them on hand. It's sort of like high chairs, except, you know, bigger. And usually with less dried-on food.

Anyway, we tried to make do with something reinforced for big orks, which worked great until Loog got his doublewide ass wedged in between the reinforced armrests. Trust me: two waiters having to pry you out of your chair at the end of dinner is no way to be inconspicuous.

But anyway. The run.

I think maybe somebody forgot to let Mr. Johnson in on what kind of team we were. If we hadn't been into some bad mammajammas for nearly twenty grand between the three of us, we wouldn't have looked twice at this one. But we've all become pretty accustomed to eating and keeping all our limbs attached. These things tend to make us a little less choosy about what jobs we take.

Which is why less than a day later, the three of us were loitering around near the buffet table at the kind of gig we'd normally get kicked out of, feeling way out of place and waiting for the right moment to make our move.

The gig was a charity gala for one of those high-profile metahuman-rights organizations that you're always seeing ads for on the trid: not quite as bad as the ones with the big-eyed puppies that everybody scrambles to click right past, but almost. Starving orphans, rich ladies feeling good about themselves, you know the drill. Not that I don't care about orphan kids, mind you: I just have a low tolerance for self-important bullshit. Which is what this was. The only thing worse is *formal-dress* self-important bullshit. Which this also was.

Have you ever tried to find a rental tux for a three-meter-tall troll on short notice? Let's just say Loogie was going to have to be very careful about bending over, unless he wanted to share his smiley-face boxers with the cream of Seattle's glitterati.

Mavis wasn't doing much better. Picture a butch-lesbian dwarf with a bright-blue crewcut and facial tattoos trying to rock a slinky green evening gown and opera gloves, and you'll get the idea. Hey, it was all we could find in her size. It's not like she kept that kind of stuff in her closet. She looked like she was about to start chewing on tables any minute, and I'm pretty sure she had

BY ROBYN 'RAT' KING

her combat boots on under that long skirt. I'm not proud to say I was too scared to get close enough to check. Mavis *bites*.

Anyway, I hear you asking: What the hell were you guys *doing* at said gala?

Oh, nothing much. Just extracting Wildside.

For anybody who's lived in a cave for the last six months or so, Wildside is a band. And just so we can be as inconspicuous as possible, they're a band consisting of a sasquatch, a pixie, and a centaur. Which kind of sounds like the beginning of a really bad joke.

A fraggin' *centaur*. You know: four legs, horse face, long tail?

Yeah. Inconspicuous was *not* gonna happen.

Did I mention we were twenty grand in the hole?

The only good news about the whole thing was that they *wanted* to be extracted. Apparently their current label pulled a few fast ones on them when they were starting out, and when they got popular and started raking in the nuyen, they found out that they were only seeing a fraction of it. Needless to say, their label was keeping a tight hold on them, and they wanted a change of management.

That's where we came in.

It was all planned out, Mr. Johnson told us. Wildside was one of the acts on hand for entertainment at the shindig, which was being held in a ballroom on the top floor of one of the Downtown hotels. They'd do their set, then head off to take a break in one of the side rooms. We'd slip out, take out the two goons guarding the door and whatever security wonks the label had stuck to the band's asses, and escort the band members to a waiting freight elevator. Johnson's people would be waiting in the parking garage with appropriate transportation. In and out, one hour max. Easy as falling off a horse, right?

Okay, given the job, maybe that wasn't the best choice of metaphor. And anyway, I wasn't too sure of our chances of sneaking out with a horse and a giant walking carpet. At least the pixie would be easy to hide. If need be, Loogie could stuff him in his pocket.

Wildside was scheduled to be the third act on the playlist. The second one, three ork kids with more volume than talent, were up when we got in. I stayed near the buffet table and scoped the place out while Mavis and Loogie moved off to take their positions, Mavis to start working her magic in the Matrix and Loog to get over by the door where the band would head out after their set. Normally, giving Loogie a "lurk and look unobtrusive" job would be about as smart as trying to goose Lofwyr, but there were enough trolls at the party that he actually kind of blended in. Now I knew who'd rented all those tuxes. As one of the few

humans in the room, *I* was the one most likely to stand out. That was weird.

"You in?" I sent Mavis over our net.

"Yeah. Sitting tight."

"Loog?"

"Good to go."

So now it was just the waiting. I put a few hors-d'oeuvres on a plate and watched the crowd, scanning for anybody who looked suspicious. It would have been great if we'd had some magical support, but it also would have been great if we'd had the twenty grand we needed and hadn't had to take this job at all. I picked out the likely security guards and marked them on AR, but if things went the way we planned we wouldn't have to deal with them. All the violence would take place on the other side of the door Loogie was watching.

The orks finished their set and ran offstage to scattered applause, disappearing through Loogie's door. Then the applause got a lot louder and we got our first glimpse of Wildside.

We'd seen them on the trid, of course. Who hadn't? But the trid didn't do them justice. I moved in a little closer to the stage as everybody packed in to get a better look and they launched into their current hit song. I'd heard some pretty weird music in my day, but hearing *Meltdown* live had to be one of the weirdest. The centaur, Dmitri D, played a guitar adapted for the fact that he only had three fingers per hand; he looked like the top half of your stereotypical metalhead and the bottom half of a small draft horse. The pixie, Flick, was a little glowing force flitting around like mad in the back, zipping back and forth through something that looked like a theremin pimped out with a laser show.

And then there was Stellaluna, the sasquatch. Three meters tall and covered in light brown fur, she was belting out something that sounded like ground zero at a nuclear catastrophe, complete with emergency sirens. Only more melodic. You didn't really get the full effect on the trid: the music *thrummed* through my body, reaching into me on some deep level. If I, the original mundane, could feel that, I guessed that the spellslinging types in the crowd were wetting themselves right about now. "Okay," I muttered into the comm. "Get ready. They're only doing the one song, so—"

That was about when the cake in the middle of the buffet table exploded. The one I was standing directly in front of.

It was a good thing the explosion was designed to make a lot of noise and attract a lot of attention rather than cause injury, or I'd have been a red smear on the floor. Instead, I felt gooey chunks of icing patter across the back of my rented tux and stick in my hair.

"Okay, nobody move!" a loud voice yelled. A guy leaped up onto the front of the stage, brandishing a small but deadly looking SMG. Others—all human, all in tuxes—appeared around the periphery, their own SMGs aimed at the sec-guards.

Somebody screamed. The crowd teetered in a perfect equilibrium, poised between obeying the order and surrendering to its collective lizard-brain panic instinct.

"What the—?" came Loog's voice over my 'link.

"Somebody's taken control of the grid in here," Mavis said. "Place is in lockdown."

"Can you get it back?" I demanded, my gaze darting between the crowd, the gunmen, and the band. How the hell were we gonna get Wildside out of here if these chuckleheads were pulling off a heist on the high-society sheep? I watched the twenty grand sprout wings and begin to fly away.

No. Wait. That was the pixie.

One second he was there, and the next he'd disappeared. "Mavis?" I muttered.

"Workin' on it," came her tight reply.

The guys with the guns didn't seem to be paying any attention to the band. I wondered for a moment why they were there, but then the one on the stage made it clear: "Okay, you meta scum, listen up! You move, we plug ya, got it? We're the Human Militia, and we want one million nuyen. Now. Or we start sendin' rich metas outta here in body bags. Got it?" He waved the gun around for emphasis.

Oh, great. Bigots.

Amateur bigots, even. How the hell did they even get *in* here? Fraggin' useless security.

The crowd was petrified. Even the trolls, who probably could have steamrolled these twits without ripping their rented tuxes.

"What's the plan, Joey?" came Loogie's voice over the link. "Gonna have a lotta dead people in here if these guys get twitchy."

"Yeah," I growled. "And they're fraggin' up our extraction."

The air split with the shriek of a siren, so loud I thought it was going to break my head open. It was exactly the sort of sound that KE's SWAT vehicles made. Don't ask me how I know this. I just do, okay? *What the frag?*

All around the room people were clamping their hands to their heads. All but the Human Militia guys, who were all suddenly looking around in panic, trying to figure out where the cops were.

I realized what was going on right about the time Dmitri the Centaur reared back, spun on his hooves, and booted the dude on the stage so hard with his back legs that the guy went airborne and landed in the middle of the crowd. His SMG went flying in the opposite direction.

"Go!" I yelled into the link as the screams started again. Everybody, including the gunmen, was freaking out. I vaulted up on the stage next to Dmitri, as behind us Stella kept up the steady shriek of the siren. She grinned at me, her teeth flashing white in her hairy face.

"Get us the hell out of here," Dmitri said in his thick Russian accent.

"Workin' on it," I said through gritted teeth, already pulling out my own gun. Unfortunately all we'd been able to smuggle past the guards were handguns, which weren't going to hold up too well against those SMGs. We'd have to move fast, before they figured out there weren't really any cops.

Off to my left I saw Loogie wading in, busting two of the

Human Militia guys' heads together as they tried to deal with the suddenly energized crowd. The crowd wasn't *useful*, exactly: panicked crowds never were. But they were providing a damn good diversion. "Get down here," Loog snapped. "I can't use these fuckin' tiny guns."

"C'mon," I told Dmitri. "You're a target up here."

"I am target wherever I am," he said, but he got up a head of steam and leaped gracefully off the stage, coming to rest in a spot the crowd had cleared. He still held his guitar.

I didn't know how many of the Human Militia guys there were. Loogie tossed me an SMG. "Mavis, you got that elevator open yet?" And where the hell was the pixie?

"Not yet. Looks like their decker's better than their muscle."

Fucking *great*. "I guess you don't do stairs, huh?" I asked Dmitri over my shoulder.

The look he gave me could have cut through plasteel.

To my right came the unmistakable sound of SMG fire. Oh, this just kept getting better. Loog and I wore armor under our tuxes, but Wildside were sitting ducks, or horses, or whatever, if the lead started flying.

Dmitri turned, slung his guitar onto his back, and made some kind of elaborate sign-language gestures toward the stage. The sirens stopped, replaced with the sound of a distorted voice over a bullhorn: "*This is Knight Errant! You are surrounded! Drop your weapons!*" This was followed by a series of shotgun blasts.

And then the air above us lit up with an array of flashing lights—you know, the kind you're not supposed to look at if you have epilepsy. The crowd, including the gunmen, went nuts. A tiny, high-pitched voice giggled near my right ear, but a quick glance revealed nothing there.

"Got the door," came Mavis's voice. "Hurry up, though. Might not have it for long."

"We need the elevator," I said with a glance at Dmitri.

Stella was wading through the crowd now, still pumping out great imitations of various KE sounds. Her big furry form towered over everybody but the trolls. If the gunmen hadn't been transfixed by the pretty lights, she'd have been Target One. Up close, the smell of her damp fur reminded me of a dog I'd once had. "We're outta here," I told them. "Where's Flick?"

The giggle sounded in my ear again, and I felt a tiny weight settle on my shoulder for a second. "I got this!" a high-pitched voice said.

"What about all these people?" Loogie demanded, trying to shepherd Stella toward the door.

I risked a glance over my shoulder. Flick's lightshow was still going and, wonder of wonders, it looked like the crowd was finally getting their act together and realizing that they had the gunmen outnumbered. Obviously the Human Militia guys were counting on shock and surprise to let them get into position, but whatever plans they'd made were pretty much screwed at this point. I guess they hadn't expected to get their asses kicked by the *band*.

Okay, I wouldn't either. That would just be *embarrassing*.

"They'll be okay," I said. "Come *on!*"

I hoped Mavis would be able to get the elevator back. Trying to get a horse and an oversized teddy bear down twenty flights of stairs was not something I was looking forward to. I wondered if the pixie had a levitation spell: maybe we could turn Dmitri into the world's first pegacentaur.

We surged through the open door, Loog going first to make sure the coast was clear. Good thing he did, too: as soon as we all got in and slammed it behind us, voices yelled from the other end of the hallway. "Hold it!"

Oh, frag, I'd forgotten about the label guys.

There were four of them: two near where we'd come in, like they were debating whether to go back in and try to rescue their charges, and the other two down by the break-room door. All of them had guns out.

Loogie and Dmitri moved in unison like they'd planned it: Loog brought a fist the size of a devil rat down on the left guy's head, and Dmitri swung his guitar over his head and cracked it down on the right guy's skull. Both of them dropped instantly.

Holy drek, the freakshow played *hardball!* Maybe we'd get out of here after all. Shame about the guitar, though.

Stella had stopped making her KE noises, but now the harsh sound of an alarm—a real one this time—erupted out of unseen speakers all around us. "Got the elevator!" Mavis's voice said in the 'link. "Go, go. Already got Knights showin' up downstairs. End of hall, past the break room! Go!"

Loog and I moved fast, putting our armored selves between the band and the remaining gunmen. This was gonna hurt, but we couldn't let the band take hits. It looked bad to Johnsons when you let your clients get plugged.

I shouldn't have worried. I kept forgetting about Flick. I *still* hadn't seen the little fragger, but suddenly the two gunmen shrieked and dropped their guns, clutching their hands together like they'd just grabbed hot wires. "Yes!" the tiny voice cried in triumph. "We're outta here!"

And we were. We slipped past the stricken gunmen (Loogie and Dmitri made quick work of them on the way by, as Stella favored them with that little riff everybody knows from trid cartoons: You know, the one that means, 'too bad, you're screwed').

Mavis was waiting for us in the elevator. She gave our motley little group a sideways look, but otherwise didn't comment. She *was* wearing her combat boots, I noticed.

Stella was grinning like her face was gonna split in half as the elevator trundled its way down toward the ground floor. She held up her furry hands and whipped out a whole stream of sign language aimed directly at me. I looked helplessly at Dmitri. "What'd she say?"

The centaur was grinning too. "She says this is most fun she's had in years. Wants to know if we can do it again sometime."

Flick's giggle came again, and I felt tiny hands picking icing out of my hair.

"Uh..." I said with a glance at Loog and Mavis. "Tell her we'll get back to her."

CONSTRUCTION KITS

A RANGE OF OPTIONS

Shadowrun is a game of characters—in every sense of the word. The Sixth World gains life from a wide variety of runners, gutterpunks, corporate drones, spies, cops, detectives, and so on. Such a variety of characters demands a variety of ways for them to come into being. This chapter presents new options for character creation, giving players a chance to select the method they prefer to design the exact character they want to play. There are three basic options here: The **Sum to Ten** option, which uses the Priority Table from *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, but provides increased flexibility in how you use it; a **Point Buy** system, which gives the fullest range of flexibility to character design; and a **Life Module** system, which allows players to use particular elements of their character's background to inform the stats and design. Note that all three of these options receive free Karma for Knowledge and Language skills and Contacts as described on p. 89 and p. 98, *SR5*.

SUM TO TEN GENERATION

Sum to Ten is an option for players and gamemasters seeking a middle ground between the rigidity of the standard priority chart and the complexity of more flexible, but advanced, character-generation methods. Using this choice, players refer to either the new Sum to Ten Priority Table or simply the basic Priority Table (p. 65, *SR5*) with one change: Rather than selecting A, B, C, D, E as normal, players are given a pool of ten (10) points to spend on priorities. Choosing A costs 4 points, B is 3, C is 2, D is 1, and an E choice is free.

Creating a standard character, with a priority array of A, B, C, D, E, would cost 10 points. Sum to Ten characters receive the same 10 points to spend—the same amount of potential—but may invest them however they wish. Sum to Ten allows a player to choose A multiple times and then settle for D and E levels for the rest of creation, to create a character with C Priority Levels all the way across the board, or even to essentially mimic the standard Priority array, if that's what they prefer.

Though each Priority Level (A, B, C, D, and E) can be selected more than once under this method, keep in mind that each column (Metatype, Attributes, Magic/Resonance, Skills, and Resources) may still only be selected once. No trying and take the 0-cost "E" option over and over again, gaining your Human character +1 special attribute point each time, or creating an infinite loop of 6,000 nuyen profits over and over again. You have to hack the Matrix, not the chargen system, sorry!

SUM TO TEN SUMMARY

Spend 10 points on Priorities, using this modified table or the standard Priority Table (p. 65, *SR5*) with the following adjustment:

A Priority	=	4 points
B Priority	=	3 points
C Priority	=	2 points
D Priority	=	1 point
E Priority	=	0 points

BUILDING CHARACTERS WITH SUM TO TEN

Let's say Dave wants to build a hotshot combat decker, a tough merc who can hold his own in a firefight just as well as he can in the Matrix. He doesn't invest anything at all in either Metatype or Magic (E Priority in both cases for 0 points each, giving him no magical potential, and granting his human just 1 special attribute point). With all 10 of his priority points remaining, though, he spends 3 to get a B in Attributes (20 points, which should give him a decent spread of both physical and mental stats), spends 3 more for another B in Skills (36 skill points and 5 points of skill groups goes pretty far!), and then sinks his last 4 points to get an A for Resources (maxing out his bankroll with 450,000 to spend on a red-hot cyberdeck and a fair amount of combat chrome, to boot). Dave's final choices of A, B, B, E, E let him build the character he wants, while retaining the easy-to-use bundles provided by the priority chart.

Felicia wants to make a sort of "everyelf" character, a corporate wagemage whose new trickster totem drives

PRIORITY TABLE

PRIORITY	METATYPE	ATTRIBUTES	MAGIC OR RESONANCE	SKILLS	RESOURCES
A (4)	Human (9) Elf (8) Dwarf (7) Ork (7) Troll (5)	24	**Magician or Mystic Adept:** Magic 6, two Rating 5 Magical skills, 10 spells, rituals, and/or alchemical preparations **Technomancer:** Resonance 6, two Rating 5 Resonance skills, 5 complex forms	46/10	450,000¥
B (3)	Human (7) Elf (6) Dwarf (4) Ork (4) Troll (0)	20	**Magician or Mystic Adept:** Magic 4, two Rating 4 Magical skills, 7 spells, rituals, and/or alchemical preparations **Technomancer:** Resonance 4, two Rating 4 Resonance skills, 2 complex forms **Adept:** Magic 6, one Rating 4 Active skill **Aspected Magician:** Magic 5, one Rating 4 Magical skill group	36/5	275,000¥
C (2)	Human (5) Elf (3) Dwarf (1) Ork (0)	16	**Magician or Mystic Adept:** Magic 3, 5 spells, rituals, and/or alchemical preparations **Technomancer:** Resonance 3, 1 complex form **Adept:** Magic 4, one Rating 2 Active skill **Aspected Magician:** Magic 3, one Rating 2 Magical skill group	28/2	140,000¥
D (1)	Human (3) Elf (0)	14	**Adept:** Magic 2 **Aspected Magician:** Magic 2	22/0	50,000¥
E (0)	Human (1)	12	—	18/0	6,000¥

her to the shadows. Choosing Priority C for Metatype costs her 2 of her 10 points and grants her an elven character with 3 special attribute points, which will give her a decent Edge score as long as she buys Magic points elsewhere). Another 2 points gets her the C choice in attributes, gaining her 16 points (which she'll use for a fairly even spread to all her stats, with a bit of a shamanic bent from her elven bonuses). Continuing the trend, spending 2 points at a time to get Cs across the board, she makes a Magician with a base Magic of 3 and 5 spells, 28/2 for skills, and a reasonable corporate employee savings account with 140,000 nuyen to invest. Her former researcher will be decent at lots of stuff, can use Edge to shine at key moments, and will have a lot of room to grow, thanks to her C, C, C, C, C array.

Kevin decides that a tough, no-frills, urban sprawl neo-primitive could be fun. As a semi-luddite who's just barely scraping by, he short-changes his Resources (E, for 0 points and just 6,000 to spend) and Magic (E, 0 points, as mundane as a brick). He goes for an impressive A in Skills (costing 4 priority points, but granting 46 skill points and 10 group points) and another A in Attributes (another 4, scoring him the maximum 24 attribute points). His last 2 priority points go toward a C in Metatype, making a Dwarf with 1 special attribute point to increase his Edge, showing that he's already pretty grizzled just from surviving amidst the urban squalor. With plenty of skill points and a solid base of attributes to go around, even with just a compound bow and a few blades, he'll be a pretty dangerous character thanks to his A, A, C, E, E spread.

Rusty wants a classic combat mage, good with a gun or a blade, not just a spell. He decides to get a B (3 points each) in Attributes, Magic, and Skills (giving him enough stats to be all-around decent, a solid Magic score, diverse spells, and a few extra Magical skills, and a big 36/5 for a wide variety of skills). He opts for the 0-cost Human option for Metatype (still granting him an Edge point up his sleeve), and then spends his last priority point for 50,000 in Resources, which should be

METATYPE COST TABLE

METATYPE	COST
Basic metatypes	
Human	0
Dwarf	50 Karma
Elf	40 Karma
Ork	50 Karma
Troll	90 Karma
Extended metatypes	
Centaur	60
Cyclops	100
Dryad	90
Fomorian	100
Giant	90
Gnome	50
Hanuman	100
Hobgoblin	40
Koborokuru	70
Menehune	50
Minotaur	100
Naga	95
Nartaki	40
Nocturna	60
Ogre	40
Oni	90
Pixie	70
Sasquatch	90
Satyr	50
Shapeshifter [Bovine; Vulpine]	100
Shapeshifter [Canine; Falconine]	110
Shapeshifter [Lapine; Equine]	120
Shapeshifter [Pantherine; Tigrine]	150
Shapeshifter [Ursine; Leonine]	160
Wakyambi	70
Xapiri Thlpë	80

enough to let him kit himself out like a proper shadowrunner. B, B, B, D, E allows him to create a character with solid competence in more than one field.

POINT BUY

The Point Buy method has greater flexibility than any other system; the tradeoff, of course, is that the complete range of options available can make character creation a somewhat time-consuming process. For many, though, the time investment is worth it, as they have the chance to design a character precisely the way they want it to be.

In the Point Buy system, you start with 800 Karma. The first thing you have to do is purchase a metatype, as per the Metatype Cost Table.

Once you have purchased your metatype, set your attributes at the minimum levels using the Metatype Attribute Table on p. 66, *SR5*, or pp. 104-5 of this book. From this point on, the Point Buy system generally works similar to **Character Advancement** (p 103, *SR5*), only you are advancing a character with the minimum attributes for their metatype and no skills. The player uses Karma to buy attributes, skills, qualities, contacts (per the rules on p. 98, *SR5*), gear (at the cost of 1 Karma for every 2,000 nuyen; a maximum of 235 Karma can be spent this way), and anything else needed to flesh the character out. The things that must be taken in consideration are the following: First, as with the Priority System, characters at creation may only have 1 Mental or Physical attribute at their natural maximum (the special attributes—Edge, Magic, and Resonance—do not fall under this limit). Second, if characters want to use Magic or the Resonance, they must buy one of the additional qualities below:

Adept (20 Karma): This makes a character an adept, able to channel mana into physical abilities. They get a Magic Rating of 1 and can buy more ranks with Karma. As with customary character creation, the character gets free power points equal to their Magic Rating. For more information on adepts, see p. 69, *SR5*.

Aspected Magician (15 Karma): Selecting this quality allows a character to be an aspected magician, meaning they are skilled in one particular area of magic—Sorcery, Conjuring, or Enchanting. They get a Magic Rating of 1 and can buy more ranks with Karma. For more information on the abilities and limitations of aspected magicians, see p. 69, *SR5*.

Magician (30 Karma): This makes the character a magic-user, able to cast spells, conjure spirits, and use other magical abilities. They get a Magic Rating of 1 and can buy more ranks with Karma. For more information on magicians and what they can do, see p. 69, *SR5*.

Mystic Adept (35 Karma): This makes the character a mystic adept, a hybrid of magician and adept who can

cast spells while also gaining some of the physical abilities of an adept. They get a Magic Rating of 1 and can buy more ranks with Karma. They do not gain free power points; instead, they need to buy power points at a cost of 5 Karma per power point (to a maximum number equal to their Magic Rating).

Technomancer (15 Karma): With this quality, a character becomes a technomancer. They gain the Resonance attribute at a level of 1 and can buy more ranks with Karma. For more information on technomancers, see the Life as a Technomancer in 2075 sidebar on p. 69, *SR5*, as well as game rules starting on p. 249, *SR5*.

Note that leftover Karma from the point-buy process cannot be carried over from character creation—it's use it or lose it! As with the priority system, no more than 5,000 nuyen can be carried over from character creation. Characters roll for starting nuyen per their purchased lifestyle, using the Starting Nuyen Table, p. 95, *SR5*.

LIFE MODULES

This system starts similar to the Point Buy system, in that characters start with 750 Karma to build their character (note that this is lower than the Point Buy method due to the benefits of the various modules that are part of this method). Rather than just picking attributes, skills, and the like, though, players choose various Life Modules to represent their characters' lives to this point—their background, their skills, etc. Each Life Module has a Karma cost that is deducted from the total; the points invested in each module reflect specific and relevant skills or abilities.

When using this method, the first thing to do is select a metatype and deduct the cost of this from your Karma; the cost for each metatype is listed in the Metatype Cost Table (p. 64). Set your attributes at the minimum level for your selected metatype. Then you need to choose Nationality and the specific region you hail from in that nation. All of these packages cost 15 Karma. Once you have made your selection, make the appropriate adjust-

ments to your attributes and skills, as noted with each Nationality and Region/Demographic. Note that there is no Karma bonus when taking a Region/Demographic with a negative quality, or Karma cost when taking a region with a positive quality or with bonuses to skills or attributes. All these costs and bonuses are already calculated into the Karma cost of the module. When a Karma cost or bonus is listed with a quality, it is there to denote the level of that particular quality, not the cost the character must pay.

Note that no active skill may be raised above 7 in this system. If a module is selected that would raise an active skill above 7, the module can be selected, but ranks in a skill over 7 are lost. Knowledge skills can be raised to a maximum of 9. If a skill group is selected but previous selections have made skills in the group have different value, simply add one rank to each skill in the group.

Note that Magic or Resonance abilities are not included in any of the Life Modules, so characters who want to follow those paths should buy those features at some point in the character creation process for the costs listed on p. 64. They receive the attributes as listed with those qualities.

NATIONALITIES

UNITED CANADIAN AND AMERICAN STATES (UCAS)

The UCAS—land of the free, home of the brave. No matter how much the megacorporations control the lives of the citizens, no matter how many government officials are caught selling out their constituents for a thin grasp at power, no matter how many sham elections put corporate-controlled puppets into power, UCAS residents still hold true to this old, outdated image. What they are in truth is a nation of great wealth and tremendous power, and if the citizens are lucky, they might someday touch a small piece of it.

CONFEDERATION OF AMERICAN STATES (CAS)

Generally consisting of what used to be the southeastern United States, the CAS is independent, feisty, and often caught in a difficult place. With the military power of Ares-backed UCAS up north, the massive brawn of Aztlan to the south, and the often-hostile Native American Nations to the west, CAS citizens often feel like they always need to be watching their backs. But they are tough and ornery enough to not just survive under difficult conditions, but keep looking for ways to thrive.

NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS (NAN)

The NAN is a loose coalition of Native American-governed nations in the western and northwestern por-

UCAS DETAILS

Primary Language	English (N)
Secondary Languages (choose one language with 1 rank)	Spanish, German, Italian, French, Mandarin, Polish, Yiddish
Universal Skills	Computer +1, Knowledge: History +1, Knowledge: UCAS +1
Regions	
General UCAS	Logic +1, Etiquette +1, Knowledge: [City] +2, Language +2, SINner (5)
Canada	Body +1, Navigation +1, Survival +1, Etiquette +1, SINner (5)
Denver (UCAS sector)	Intuition +1, Knowledge: Denver +2, Negotiation +1, Etiquette +1, SINner (5)
Seattle	Reaction +1, Perception +1, Intimidation +1, Knowledge: Seattle +2, SINner (5)
SINless	Agility +1, Knowledge: [City] +1

CAS DETAILS

Primary Language	English (N)
Secondary Languages (choose one language with 1 rank)	Spanish, German, Polish, Yiddish
Universal Skills	Etiquette +1, Knowledge: History +1, Knowledge: CAS +1
Regions	
General CAS	Charisma +1, Computer +2, SINner (5)
Denver	Intuition +1, Knowledge: Denver 2, Negotiation +1, Computer +1, SINner (5)
SINless	Body +1, Knowledge: [City] +1

NAN DETAILS

Primary Language	Choose one of the languages listed in the Regions section.
Secondary Languages	See Regions; when available, select one Secondary Language with 1 rank. English may also be selected with 1 rank.
Universal Skills	Archery +2, Knowledge: History +1, Knowledge: NAN +1
Regions	
Algonkian-Manitou Council	Languages: Athabaskan, Anishinaabe, Iroquoian, Outdoor skill group +1, Perception +1, Blades +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Street Knowledge: [Tribe] +1, SINner (5)
Athabaskan Council	Languages: Athabaskan, Eskimo-Aleut, Body +1, Survival +1, SINner (5)
Pueblo Corporate Council	Languages: Uto-Aztecan, Zuni, Electronics skill group +1, Etiquette +2, Professional Knowledge: Business Practices +1, SINner (5)
Salish-Shidhe Council	Secondary Languages: Salish, Siouan, Or'zet, Logic +1, Survival +1, SINner (5)
Sioux Nation	Languages: Anishinaabe, Athabaskan, Iroquoian, Siouan, Outdoor skill group +1, Blades +2, Street Knowledge: Sioux Culture +1, SINner (5)
Trans-Polar Aleut Nation	Languages: Eskimo-Aleut, Exotic Melee Weapon (Harpoon) +2, Perception +1, Survival +1, Professional Knowledge: Polar Critters +2, SINner (5)
Tsimshian Nation	Languages: Athabaskan, Tlingit, Tsimshianic, Siouan, Strength +1, Blades +1, Allergy (Uncommon/Mild) (5)
Denver	Languages: English, Hopi, Siouan, Spanish, Zuni; Intuition +1, Computer +1, SINner (5)
Las Vegas	Languages: any Native American Tribal, Perception +1, Con +2, Etiquette +1, Street Knowledge: Gambling Games +2, SINner (5)
Salt Lake City	Languages: English, Hopi, Spanish, Zuni; Artisan +1, Computer +1, Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Perception +1, Street Knowledge: Mormons+ 2, SINner (5)

tions of North America. They do not always get along—in fact, they often are involved in plots against each other—but they still much prefer dealing with each other to treating with the other nations of their continent. Citizens of the NAN tend to have a respect for history and their traditional cultures, but never make the mistake of thinking of them as backwards—they can be as skilled with tech as anyone around.

TÍR TAIRNGIRE

The elven nation of Tír Tairngire is a secretive, magical place of great power and greater arrogance. While they have become more open to outsiders in recent years, they still have trouble completely trusting anyone who is not a homegrown elf—particularly if that person is an ork or troll (possibly including the ones who are Tír residents). The current High Prince of the nation, Marie Telestrian, comes from the pre-eminent corporate dynasty of the nation, so it is not surprising that she has corporate sympathies. Rumors in the shadows, though, speak of family connections to some of the wilder and woolier segments of Sixth World street life, which is as it should be. What's an elegant exterior without a rotten underbelly festering away underneath?

TÍR TAIRNGIRE DETAILS

Primary Language	Sperethiel (N)
Secondary Language	English 2
Universal Skills	Etiquette +1, Knowledge: History +1, Street Knowledge: Tir Tairngire +1
Demographic	
Elves/Humans	Charisma +1, Computer +2, SINner (5)
Orks/Trolls/Dwarfs	Con +2, Disguise +1, Intimidation +1, Sneaking +1, Perception +1, Street Knowledge: Counterculture +2, SINner (5)

FORMATIVE YEARS

Now you need to pick your first Life Module. This will bring your age up to age ten and should describe what early childhood was like for your character. All of these packages cost 40 Karma.

ARCOLOGY LIVING

Arcologies represent an ideal of corporate control—mammoth buildings that employees never need leave, where they can work, eat, and sleep while under the

watchful eye of their parent corp. Oh, and they also can shop—they can drop money at corporate-controlled establishments, helping ensure that their paychecks never really leave the corp. Arcologies are sold as the ultimate in compact living, a place with all your needs at your fingertips. The reality is they are something like a prison with nice amenities but a stringent forced labor requirement. When everything and everyone you see is corp property, it can't help but shape how you grow up.

ARCOLOGY LIVING

Attributes	Logic +1, Charisma +1
Qualities	Limited Corporate SIN (15)
Skills	Electronics skill group +2, Etiquette +2, Perception +1, Academic Knowledge: [Corporation] +3

CORP DRONE

The great unwashed masses of the world, the people who make things and do things and are cast aside as soon as their productivity drops. They work long hours, don't get paid well, but are told to be grateful that they are not thrown to the ravages of the street. Their life is such that sometimes they look at those ravages and decide they don't look so bad.

CORP DRONE

Attributes	Logic +1, Charisma +1
Skills	Electronics skill group +2, Etiquette +2, Perception +1, Academic Knowledge: [Corporation] +3

FARM LIVING

The world needs food, so the world needs farms, but farm life in the Sixth World is considerably different from what it was in previous centuries. Being a farmer is more about being a mechanic than working the land—machines go out and work the soil, twenty-four hours a day, and someone has to make sure they are kept in good repair and are well lubricated. If you grew up on a farm, you knew no offseason, off days, or off hours. Whether outdoors, in greenhouses, or with artificial light and other aids, plants grow at all times in the year. The machines always are at work, and so are the farmers.

FARM LIVING

Attributes	Body +1, Strength +1
Qualities	Uneducated (8), Toughness (9)
Skills	Industrial Mechanic +1, Professional Knowledge: Farming 5

FUGITIVE

You started life on the run. Your parents may have been hiding from a vengeful corp, or dogged law enforcement, or ruthless organized crime. Whatever the case, you moved around a lot, changed your name, and didn't know a whit of stability in your formative years. But you picked up plenty of useful tips on staying hidden and evading those who really want to find you.

FUGITIVE

Attributes	Reaction +1, Willpower +1, Intuition +1
Qualities	Paranoia (7), Criminal SIN (10), Bad Rep (7)
Skills	Acting skill group +2, Perception +1, Sneaking +1, Street Knowledge: [City] +2

ISOLATED RURAL UPBRINGING

The Sixth World is largely an urban domain, but there are still isolated spots in the world. Raised in a remote part of the country, with little contact with others or only limited contact, you have grown up hardy but unsophisticated and without a basic education.

ISOLATED RURAL UPBRINGING

Attributes	Body +1, Strength +1
Qualities	Uncouth (14), Uneducated (8), Toughness (9)
Skills	Blades +1, Outdoors skill group +2, Running +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Knowledge: Farming +2

MILITARY BRAT

You grew up surrounded by the military, having moved several times depending on where your parents were posted around the world. You have become a little rootless. You have seen more of the world than most kids your age, but you haven't made the same sort of friends others might have. You might have turned out more disciplined than your peers, or you might be more rebellious—it depends on how well you adjusted to the military life.

MILITARY BRAT

Attributes	Strength +1, Reaction +1
Qualities	Uncouth (14)
Skills	Close Combat skill group +2, Negotiation +1, Perception +1, Professional Knowledge: Military +3, Interest Knowledge: Military History +2

ORPHAN

You have either been abandoned by your parents or they have been killed or deemed unfit to bring you up, and the system took over the responsibilities of caring for you for a large portion of your life. You were passed from pillar to post and had a couple of homes, but you never settled in any one home or with a particular family. You became accustomed to being independent and rootless.

ORPHAN

Attributes	Willpower +1
Skills	Computer +1, Perception +2, Sneaking +2, Survival +1, Street Knowledge: [City] +3, Professional Knowledge: Foster System +3

RICH KID

You grew up with the proverbial silver spoon in your mouth, wanting for very little. You had the best schools and tutors and the best start to life money could buy—but somehow fell into the shadows anyway. Good starts can always turn bad.

RICH KID

Attributes	Charisma +1
Qualities	Trust Fund 10, Prejudiced: Poor –7
Skills	Artisan +1, Leadership +2, Computers +2, Interest Knowledge: [Any] +3, Language +3

STREET URCHIN

You grew up on the streets of the city, because your parents died, abandoned you, or failed to find you after you ran away. You had a rough life, running around with a street gangs, engaging in petty crime, and occasionally beating people who you were sure had it coming. You also might have had some connections to a more adult gang engaged in more nefarious deeds.

STREET URCHIN

Attributes	Body +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Paranoia (7), Flashbacks (7), Uneducated (8), Toughness (9)
Skills	Close Combat skill group +2, Perception +1, Running +1, Sneaking +1, Street Knowledge: [City] +3

WHITE COLLAR

Your parents were well off—doctors, attorneys, upper management in a corporation, and the like. You received a good education that taught you the ways of your parents' employer while keeping you out of the way. Your book learning is considerable, but your upbringing was sheltered, and you did not learn much about the world beyond the safe confines of your corp.

WHITE COLLAR

Attributes	Logic +1, Charisma +1
Skills	Etiquette (Professional) specialization, Negotiation +1, Interest Knowledge: [Any] +3, Language +3

TEEN YEARS

The next series of Life Modules represents your teen years and brings your character up to age seventeen. All packages cost 50 Karma.

CORPORATE EDUCATION

You have been educated by a corporation, either because that is the only thing you know, or because your family wanted to guarantee you a job when you eventually graduated. Now you are on your way to being another wageslave for one of the corporations in your hometown, selling your soul for security like so many before you.

CORPORATE EDUCATION

Attributes	Charisma +1, Logic +1
Skills	Electronics skill group +1, Chemistry +1, Gymnastics +1, Academic Knowledge: [Any, choose two] +1, Professional Knowledge: [Corporation] +2, Professional Knowledge: [Job] +2

FARM LIVING

You spent your teen years on a farm, working hard to keep all the machines that do the planting and harvesting in good order. This built you up physically and gave you some technical skills, but your book-learning is a little suspect.

FARM LIVING

Attributes	Body +1, Intuition +1
Qualities	Animal Empathy (3)
Skills	Industrial Mechanics +2, Longarms +1, Pilot Ground Craft +2, Pistols +1, Professional Knowledge: Farming +1, Interest Knowledge: [Any] +1

GANG WARFARE

You have spent your teen years fighting with your crew or gang, carrying a weapon rather than books and seeing more violence than kids should. This has made you more physically imposing than most but has severely curtailed your education.

GANG WARFARE

Attributes	Body +1, Reaction +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Black Market Pipeline (10), Paranoia (7), Uneducated (8), Criminal SIN (10)
Skills	Blades +2, Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Leadership +1, Negotiation +1, Perception +1, Running +1, Sneaking +1, Survival +1, Street Knowledge: [City] +2

HIGH SCHOOL

You did what billions did before you—you went to high school. You learned a few things, grew as a person, gained some emotional scars, and made mistakes that you might avoid in the future or might keep repeating. The main thing is, you survived.

HIGH SCHOOL

Attributes	Charisma +1, Logic +1
Skills	Athletics +1, Computers +2, Chemistry +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [Any, choose two] +1, Language +1, Street Knowledge: [Hometown/City] +1

HOME TUTORED

Instead of going out and mixing with others for your education, you were taught at home by either your parents or a hired tutor or even over the Matrix. This has given you a good education but little life experience or contact with others your own age, which has put some limits on your social growth.

HOME TUTORED

Attributes	Logic +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Social Stress (8)
Skills	Chemistry +1, Computers +3, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [Any, choose two] +3, Language +2

ISOLATED RURAL UPBRINGING

Living in a remote part of the country, with little contact with others or only limited contact, you grew into a hardy but unsophisticated teen with a limited formal education but a knowledge of some things not taught in textbooks

ISOLATED RURAL UPBRINGING

Attributes	Body +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Incompetent: Electronics (5)
Skills	Blades +1, First Aid +1, Gymnastics +1, Longarms +1, Outdoors skill group +1, Perception +2, Sneaking +1, Street Knowledge: Critters +2

MAGICAL EDUCATION

When you were young, you were identified as an Awakened and given the appropriate education. The catch is that this was a corporation-sponsored education with the proviso that you join the corporation after you leave the education system for a minimum term (you must pick either a Further Education module and then a Corporate Module, or go straight to the Corporate Module if you don't want to do the Further Education). Note that you must purchase Adept, Aspected Magician, Magician, or Mystic Adept separately (p. 44) to select this module.

MAGICAL EDUCATION

Attributes	Willpower +1, Charisma +1
Qualities	Corporate Limited SIN (15)
Skills	**Magician:** Add 1 rank to two of the following skill groups: Sorcery skill group, Conjuring skill group, Enchanting skill group. **Adept:** Add 1 rank to two of the following skill groups: Close Combat skill group, Firearms skill group, Stealth skill group. **Aspected Magician:** Add 1 rank to Sorcery skill group, Conjuring skill group, or Enchanting skill group; then add 2 to two of the following skills: Arcana, Assensing, Astral Combat. **Mystic Adept:** Add 1 rank to any of the two groups listed for Magician or Adept.
	For all: Arcana +2, Academic Knowledge: Magical Theory +5, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +4, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +4, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +3, Language [Any] +2

MILITARY SCHOOL

You gained your education through one of the many military schools throughout the world. This instilled a deep sense of discipline and a respect for authority, while breaking down some of your sense individuality. Military schools are eminently practical, emphasizing sciences and applied military subjects over arts and humanities.

MILITARY SCHOOL

Attributes	Body +1, Charisma +1
Qualities	Military Rank (5), Code of Honor (15)
Skills	Blades +1, Electronics skill group +1, Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Leadership +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Running +1, Swimming +1, Professional Knowledge: Military +3, Academic Knowledge: Military History +3, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +1, Professional Knowledge: Strategy +1

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

This is the rich-kid version of high school. You got a better-than-average education and made some powerful contacts, but you didn't get the chance to develop some of the street smarts of kids going to high school. You cannot choose this package if you have already chosen the **Fugitive** or **Isolated Rural Upbringing** packages.

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Attributes	Charisma +1, Logic +1
Qualities	First Impression (11)
Skills	Chemistry +1, Computers +1, Etiquette +1, Academic Knowledge: [Any, choose two] +1, Language [Any] +1

STREET KID

You spent a good period of time on the streets of one of the world's sprawls, due to your parents dying or abandoning you, or because you ran away from home and never found your way back. You lived rough with a street gang of other kids probably run by one of the older kids or reporting to an adult in the criminal underworld. Or perhaps you lived solo, making ends meet by begging and scrounging from those around you. Either way, for a long while your life pretty well sucked.

STREET KID	
Attributes	Body +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Bad Rep (7), Enemy (10)
Skills	Acting skill group +2, Clubs +1, Etiquette +1, Gymnastics +1, Intimidation +1, First Aid +1, Negotiation +1, Perception +1, Running +1, Stealth skill group +1, Street Knowledge: [City] +1

FURTHER EDUCATION

Your next choice of modules involves whether your character pursued higher education at formal institutions or went out and learned from the real world. If you choose Further Education, then you go to the real world after that has finished; but if you go to the real world, you cannot come back to Further Education.

Further Education modules when completed bring your character up to the age of nineteen or twenty-one depending on whether they attend a Community College/Trade School (two years) or a University (four years). The Karma cost of each module is listed in parentheses in the header.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE (55)

These are primarily two-year public institutions that are required to accept all local residents who seek admission, and they offer associate's degrees or vocational certificate programs. They are generally designed to funnel people directly into corp jobs that will keep them

alive and sheltered if not necessarily prosperous. Many community colleges have relationships with four-year state universities, colleges, or private universities that enable their students to transfer credits. Regardless of perceived prestige, many institutions feature at least one distinguished academic department, and most post-secondary Canadian-American students attend one of the 2,400 four-year colleges and universities or 1,700 two-year colleges that are not one of the twenty-five or so top-tier institutions. Once you finish this package, you can choose to do the State College or University package as well before moving on to real life.

IVY LEAGUE UNIVERSITY (80)

When you need a line on your résumé that will get the attention of the right people, then get yourself to an Ivy League school. Ivy League graduates are more likely than anyone else to regularly remind you of where they went to college, partly because they've been conditioned by the number of people who are impressed when they mention their alma mater. Formerly, there were eight Ivy League universities: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale. Additionally, the remaining six of the Seven Sister colleges—Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley (Radcliffe, the seventh, merged with Harvard) are often seen to be on the same level as the Ivys. By attending these colleges, students gain not only an impressive education, but also some of the social skills that will serve them well their whole life. They don't gain much in the way of humility, but no one can have everything.

MILITARY ACADEMY (115)

Service academies, also known as military academies, are federal academies for the undergraduate education and training of commissioned officers for the armed forces. Once you have completed this package you must choose a Tour of Duty with one of the armed forces. If you are young enough you may be in the reserves for an additional three years—assuming you don't do another Tour of Duty, that is.

There are six major service academies in North America:

- The CAS Armed Forces Academy, in Atlanta founded 2036.
- The UCAS Military Academy (USMA) in West Point, New York, founded in 1802.
- The UCAS Naval Academy (USNA) in Annapolis, Maryland, founded in 1845.
- The UCAS Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) in New London, Connecticut, founded in 1876.
- The NAN Forces Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, founded in 1954 and rededicated in 2035.
- The UCAS Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) in Kings Point, New York, founded in 1943.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Attributes	Logic +1, Willpower +1
Science Disciplines	
Architecture	Artisan: Drawing specialization, First Aid +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Academic Knowledge: Buildings +5
Business	Con +1, Etiquette +1, Negotiation +2, Academic Knowledge: Economics +5
Computer Science	Cybercombat +1, Electronics skill group +1, Hacking +1, Academic Knowledge: Matrix Design +5
Engineering	Chemistry +1, Hardware +1, Industrial Mechanic +2, Academic Knowledge: Engineering +5
Law	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +2, Performance +1, Academic Knowledge: Law +5
Magic	Sorcery skill group +1, Academic Knowledge: Magical Theory or Metaplanes +5
Mathematics	Computer +1, Etiquette +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: Mathematics +5
Medicine	Biotech skill group +2, Chemistry +1, Academic Knowledge: Medicine +6
Natural Sciences	Computer +1, First Aid +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [Chemistry/Physics/Biology] +5
Arts Disciplines	
Art	Artisan +3, Academic Knowledge: Art History +3
History	Computer +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [National or World] History +2
Languages	Language: [Any] +6, Language: [Any] +5, Negotiation +1, Etiquette +1
Literature	Artisan (Writing) specialization, Etiquette +1, Academic Knowledge: Literature +5,
Metahumanities	Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: [Ancient Language/Philosophy/Religion) +13 (spread out among at least three subjects, minimum three ranks per subject)
Social Sciences	Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: [Sociology/Psychology/Archaeology/Criminology/Politics] +13 (spread out among at least three subjects, minimum three ranks per subject)

IVY LEAGUE UNIVERSITY

Attributes	Charisma +1, Logic +1, Willpower +1
Universal Skills	Computer +1, Etiquette +1, Perception +1, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +4
Science Disciplines	
Architecture	First Aid +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Academic Knowledge: Buildings +6
Business	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Academic Knowledge: Economics +6
Computer Science	Electronics skill group +1, Academic Knowledge: Matrix Design +5
Engineering	Chemistry +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Academic Knowledge: Engineering +6
Law	Negotiation +1, Performance +1, Academic Knowledge: Law +6
Magic	Sorcery skill group +1, Academic Knowledge: Magical Theory or Metaplanes +5
Mathematics	Etiquette +1, Software +1, Academic Knowledge: Mathematics +6
Medicine	Biotech skill group +1, Academic Knowledge: Medicine +5
Natural Sciences	Computer +1, Software +1, Academic Knowledge: [Chemistry/Physics/Biology (choose one)] +6
Arts Disciplines	
Art	Artisan +2, Academic Knowledge: Art History +4
History	Computer +1, Software +1, Academic Knowledge: History +6
Languages	Etiquette +1, Language: [Any] +4, Language: [Any] +2, Language: [Any] +2
Literature	Artisan +1 (with Writing specialization), Academic Knowledge: Literature +4
Metahumanities	Academic Knowledge: [Ancient Language/Philosophy/Religion] +10 (divide among all three areas, with each area having a minimum of two ranks)
Social Sciences	Academic Knowledge: [Sociology/Psychology/Archaeology/Criminology/Politics] +10 (divide among at least three areas, with no single area having more than 6 ranks)

MILITARY ACADEMY

Attributes	Body +1, Reaction +1, Strength +1
Qualities	Military Rank (20)
Universal Skills	Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Leadership +1, Navigation +1, Swimming +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Academic Knowledge: Military History +2, Professional Knowledge: Military +3
Science Disciplines	
Architecture	Artisan (Drawing specialization), First Aid +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Academic Knowledge: Buildings +5
Business	Con +1, Etiquette +1, Negotiation +2, Academic Knowledge: Economics +5
Computer Science	Cybercombat +1, Electronics skill group +1, Hacking +1, Academic Knowledge: Matrix Design +6
Engineering	Chemistry +1, Hardware +1, Industrial Mechanic +2, Academic Knowledge: Engineering +5
Law	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +2, Performance +1, Academic Knowledge: Law +5
Magic	Sorcery skill group +1, Academic Knowledge: Magical Theory or Metaplanes +5
Mathematics	Computer +1, Etiquette +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: Mathematics +5
Medicine	Biotech skill group +2, Chemistry +1, Academic Knowledge: Medicine +6
Natural Sciences	Computer +1, First Aid +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [Chemistry/Physics/Biology (choose one)] +5
Arts Disciplines	
Art	Artisan +3, Academic Knowledge: Art History 3
History	Computer +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [National] or [World] History +5
Languages	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Language: [Any] +6, Language: [Any] +5
Literature	Artisan +1 (also add Writing specialization), Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: Literature +5
Metahumanities	Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: [Ancient Language/Philosophy/Religion] +13 (divide among all three, with no one skill having more than 7 ranks)
Social Sciences	Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: [Sociology/Psychology/Archaeology/Criminology/Politics] +13 (divide among desired subjects, with no one subject having more than 6 ranks)

STATE UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE (6S)

While they may not be as prestigious as Ivy League universities or other private institutions, state-funded colleges and universities provide a solid education for a reasonable price. They also provide feeder programs into the megacorporations, complete with the indoctrination needed to make sure students end up as solid corporate citizens. While there is evidence that sometime in the previous century many universities encouraged open minds and free thought, the colleges of the Sixth World emphasize the skills needed to be a dedicated worker. After all, questioning the way things are takes up valuable time that could be spent working.

TRADE SCHOOL/ TECHNICAL COLLEGE (4O)

In the Sixth World, colleges are generally seen as a funnel into corporate jobs; trade schools and technical colleges tend to process people through the funnel faster. Students get a specialized education, with a tight focus on their selected profession and little in the way of general education classes. The trades these schools prepare people for are sometimes a step below the professional occupations such as lawyer, doctor, or senior manager, but they are still better than a lot of alternatives. You may end up eating a whole lot of soy and almost no real meat, but you stand little chance of sleeping where devil rats might chew off your face, so you have that going for you.

STATE UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE

Attributes	Logic +1, Willpower +1
Skills	Computer +1, Perception +1, Etiquette +1, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +4
Science Disciplines	
Architecture	Artisan +1 (with Drawing specialization), First Aid +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Academic Knowledge: Buildings +5
Business	Con +1, Etiquette +1, Negotiation +2, Academic Knowledge: Economics +5
Computer Science	Cybercombat +1, Electronics skill group +1, Hacking +1, Academic Knowledge: Matrix Design +6
Engineering	Chemistry +1, Hardware +1, Industrial Mechanic +2, Academic Knowledge: Engineering +5
Law	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +2, Performance +1, Academic Knowledge: Law +5
Magic	Sorcery skill group +1, Academic Knowledge: Magical Theory or Metaplanes +5
Mathematics	Computer +1, Etiquette +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: Mathematics +5
Medicine	Biotech skill group +2, Chemistry +1, Academic Knowledge: Medicine +8
Natural Sciences	Computer +1, First Aid +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [Chemistry/Physics/Biology] +5
Arts Disciplines	
Art	Artisan +3, Academic Knowledge: Art History 3
History	Computer +1, Software +2, Academic Knowledge: [National] History or [World] History +5
Languages	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Language: [Any] +6, Language: [Any] +5
Literature	Artisan +1 (with Writing specialization), Computer +1, Instruction +1, Academic Knowledge: Literature +5
Metahumanities	Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: [Ancient Language/ Philosophy/Religion] +13 (distribute with no more than 6 ranks in each subject)
Social Sciences	Computer +1, Academic Knowledge: [Sociology/Psychology/ Archaeology/Criminology/Politics] +13 (no more than 6 ranks in any given subject)

TRADE/TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Attributes	Logic +1
General Studies	Computers +1, Gymnastics +2, Perception +1
Vocations	
Architect	First Aid +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Professional Knowledge: Buildings +6
Fashion Designer	Artisan +1 (with Fashion specialization), Professional Knowledge: Fashion +4
Graphic Designer	Artisan +1 (with Drawing specialization), Professional Knowledge: Corporate Logos +4
Journalist	Con +1, Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Professional Knowledge: Politics +4
Lawyer	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Performance +1, Professional Knowledge: Law +4
Mechanic	First Aid +2, Engineering skill group +1, Professional Knowledge: Mechanics +3
Media Studies	Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Professional Knowledge: Trid Shows +6
[illegible]	Biotech skill group +1, Etiquette +1, Professional Knowledge: Medicine +3
Tradesman	Automotive Mechanic +1, First Aid +1, Industrial Mechanic +1, Professional Knowledge: DIY +4

REAL LIFE

At some point—maybe two years, maybe four years, maybe more—the education stage of life ends, and a character must move on to the next stage that will shape them. The Life Modules in this section represent the early professional experience of a character. Each module takes four years for the character to live through, and each one costs 100 Karma. This is the only category where more than one module can be selected, but the same module cannot be taken twice. Additionally, skills cannot go above 7 in this process. If the skill is not part of a group, transfer the points to a skill with same linked attribute.

BOUNTY HUNTER

These jobs are easy to find but difficult to collect. Anyone with a modicum of Matrix skills can dig up a list of available bounties, but it takes some skill to find the targeted individuals, and even more skill to bring them in. Spend a few years on this job and you'll get some guts and a good collection of street and combat skills. You'll also probably collect a few scars.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Attributes	Body +1, Willpower +1, Intuition +1
Skills	Athletics skill group +1, Close Combat skill group +1, First Aid +1, Intimidation +1, Longarms +1, Perception +1, Pistols +1, Survival +1, Tracking +1, Street Knowledge: Lone Star Procedures +3, Street Knowledge: Crook Hangouts +3

CELEBRITY

One of the great innovations in popular culture in the early part of the twenty-first century was the ability to make a career out of being famous. Whether you have a popular MeFeed or have participated in one of the many reality trids out there, you can make a living just being a personality—if you have the right combination of charisma and psychosis.

CELEBRITY

Attributes	Charisma +1, and +1 to two attributes of your choice (must be two separate attributes, other than Charisma)
Qualities	Fame (8)
Skills	Con +1, Escape Artist +1, +6 to buy any skills you think appropriate to your field of celebrity (no more than 3 ranks in any individual skill; ranks in Con and Escape Artist may be purchased with these points), Professional Knowledge: [Sports/Music/Film] +3

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When guns fire and bombs explode, someone has got to brave the danger and tell the stories of war that no one else can get. Or at least someone has to get the pictures and stories that will make whatever corp or other power

is backing the war look the way they want. Either way, there is work to be done by people who can survive the frontlines of a war zone and find the right stories to tell.

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Attributes	Charisma +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Guts (10)
Skills	Electronics skill group +2, Navigation +1, Negotiation +2, Perception +2, Survival +1, Professional Knowledge: Journalism +5, Language: [Any] +3, Language: [Any] +1

CORPORATE

You graduated from college and met your destiny, taking a job at one of the world's mighty corporations. Or possibly one of the smaller, not-as-mighty ones. You didn't come in on top, of course, and might not have the most glamorous job in the world, but you have steady pay and a place to live. For some people in the Sixth World, that's enough.

CORPORATE

Attributes	Logic +1, Intuition +1
Qualities	Limited Corporate SIN (15)
Universal Skills	Etiquette +1, Professional Knowledge [Corporation] +3
Specific Jobs	
Company Man	Firearms skill group +3, Demolitions +2, Pilot Ground Craft +2, Sneaking +3, Unarmed Combat +2
Hacker/Decker	Cracking skill group +2, Electronics skill group +3, First Aid +2, Academic Knowledge: Physics +3, Professional Knowledge: Matrix Security Design +6
Security Guard	Athletics skill group +2, Close Combat skill group +2, Firearms skill group +2, Perception +2, Professional Knowledge: Security Procedures +5, Professional Knowledge: Law Enforcement Procedures +4
Security Rigger	Electronics skill group +2, Gunnery +3, Perception +2, Pilot Aircraft +2, Pilot Anthroform +2, Pilot Ground Craft +3, Professional Knowledge: Drones +3
Wage Mage	Arcana +2, Assensing +3, Astral Combat +2, Conjuring skill group +2, Enchanting skill group +1, Sorcery skill group +2, Professional Knowledge: Magical Law +1
Wage Slave	Charisma +1, Willpower +1, Con +1, Etiquette +2, Negotiation +2, Professional Knowledge: Administration +6

COVERT OPERATIONS

Maybe you met a mysterious recruiter when you were in college who promised you an "interesting life." Or maybe you demonstrated particular skills in the military that were recognized by your superiors. Or maybe you worked in a corp for a while and found your way into working for the Department of Unspecified Services. Whatever the case may be, you did a stint as a spook, playing spy games, living a double life, and gathering one of the most valuable commodities the Sixth World has to offer—information.

COVERT OPERATIONS

Attributes	Intuition +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Hawk Eye (3), Poor Link (8)
Skills	Chemistry +1, Con +1, Escape Artist +1, Etiquette +1, Gymnastics +1, Navigation +1, Perception +1, Pistols +1, Sneaking +2, Survival +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Language: [Any] +3, Knowledge: [Any] +3, Professional Knowledge: Codes +2, Street Knowledge: [City] +3

DRIFTER

Corporate life isn't for everyone. While the corporations prefer to have life paths pre-planned for everyone and anyone, some people manage not to fit into structured paths. Whether they bounce from menial job to menial job or find a way to get by without employment, characters who take this module take a while to figure out who they want to be when they grow up.

DRIFTER

Attributes	+1 to any two attributes (must be separate attributes)
Qualities	High Pain Tolerance (7), Sense of Direction (3)
Skills	Con +2, Escape Artist +1, Negotiation +1, Running +1, Sneaking +1, Survival +2, Swimming +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Street Knowledge: Grey Market +3, Street Knowledge: Black Market +3, Street Knowledge: [City] +5, Street Knowledge: [Any] +3

GANGER

Due to your rough upbringing, your boredom, or your rejection of conventional Sixth World values (such as they are), you've fallen in with a street gang. You move beyond petty crime and into the big time—break-ins, organized assaults, and even a little Matrix vandalism. If there is something that can be broken, you've explored ways to break it.

GANGER

Attributes	Body +1, Strength +1
Qualities	Criminal SIN (10)
Skills	Blades +3, Cracking skill group +1, Demolitions +1, Electronics skill group +1, Escape Artist +1, Firearms skill group +2, Heavy Weapons +1, Stealth skill group +1, Survival +1, Perception +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Running +1

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Most jobs in the Sixth World are with the corporations, but governments still need bodies to take care of their business. And some of it is dirty. The hours are long, the pay is not the best, but at the end of the day you have the satisfaction of knowing you fought for something besides corporate profits. Namely, for governmental structures that allow corporate profits to be generated as efficiently as possible.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

Attributes	Intuition +1, Reaction +1
Qualities	SINner (5)
Skills	First Aid +1, Influence skill group +2, Pistols +2, Perception +3, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Running +1, Tracking +1, Professional Knowledge: Government Procedures +5, Professional Knowledge: Law Enforcement Protocols +5, Professional Knowledge: National Threats +4

LAW ENFORCEMENT

When looking for your chosen career, you see the appeal in being part of the thin blue line that separates orderly, peaceful society from the hordes of chaos waiting to stampede over them. Plus, you like guns and look good in uniform.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Attributes	Body +1, Reaction +1, Willpower +1
Basic Training (bonuses for all)	Clubs +1, Etiquette +1, First Aid +1, Leadership +1, Perception +1, Pistols +1, Professional Knowledge: Police Procedures +3
Beat Cop	Intimidation +2, Navigation +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Professional Knowledge: [City] +5
Cyber Crime	Cracking skill group +1, Electronics skill group +1, Professional Knowledge: Matrix Criminals +5
Cyber Division	Cybertechnology +1, Firearms skill group +1, Heavy Weapons +2, Unarmed Combat +1
Mage Division	Arcana +1, Assensing +2, Sorcery skill group +1, Professional Knowledge: Magical Threats +2
Rigger	Automotive Mechanic +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Aircraft +1, Pilot Anthroform +1, Pilot Ground Craft +2, Professional Knowledge: Drones +1
SWAT Team	Armorer +1, Firearms skill group +1, Gymnastics +1, Throwing Weapons +2

ORGANIZED CRIME

You work for one of the big criminal enterprises—the Mafia, Yakuza, Triads, Seoulpa Rings, or Ghost Cartels—and you're making money hand over fist. Sure, you have to do some things you don't like to think about, but no job is perfect, right?

ORGANIZED CRIME

Qualities	Made Man (5), Criminal SIN (10)
Skills	Blades +1, Con +2, Demolitions +1, Escape Artist +1, Etiquette +1, Firearms skill group +3, Forgery +1, Hardware +1, Intimidation +2, Leadership +1, Negotiation +1, Perception +2, Piloting Ground Craft +1, Stealth skill group +1, Unarmed Combat +2, Street Knowledge: [Syndicate] +4, Street Knowledge: [City] +3

POLITICAL ACTIVIST

Either you are part of a political movement—Save the Whales, Mothers of Metahumans, Greenpeace, etc.—or you hop between movements just looking for someone to agitate, generally governments or corporations. This brings you into conflict with the authorities regularly and probably led you to doing some jail time.

POLITICAL ACTIVIST

Attributes	Charisma +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Criminal SIN (10)
Skills	Con +1, Disguise +1, Etiquette +2, Forgery +2, Instruction +1, Leadership +2, Negotiation +2, Palming +2, Perception +2, Piloting Ground Craft +1, Pistols +2, Street Knowledge: [City] +3, Street Knowledge: Police Procedures +3, Interest Knowledge: [Policlub] +4

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Once it became time for you to graduate, you took a look at the so-called "real world" and said "nah," so you signed up for a few more years. You'll still have to face the real world eventually, but there should be a nice job waiting for you when you do. Which is good, because some corp is likely going to expect you to work some long hours to pay back your student loans.

POSTGRADUATE STUIDIES

Attributes	Logic +1, Intuition +1, Charisma +1
Skills	Instruction +2, +10 to skills from your education module (no more than 4 added to any one skill), Academic Knowledge: [Major] +2, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +2

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR/ DETECTIVE (PI)

Sam Spade. Philip Marlowe. V.I. Warshawski. Dirk Montgomery. These are all templates to follow, hard-nosed private detectives who never backed down from a case and always got their man or woman. At least, most of the time. The shadows hold plenty of work for the enterprising PI, as long as you have the skills and moxie (and facility with 1940s slang) to do the job. This is the path your character has chosen. You may not pick this module until you have completed a *Tour of Duty, Law Enforcement, Covert Operations, Shadow Work, Government Agent* or *Corporate* module.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR/DETECTIVE

Attributes	Intuition +1, Logic +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	In Debt (5)
Skills	Athletics skill group +1, First Aid +1, Influence skill group +1, Perception +2, Pistols +2, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Tracking +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Street Knowledge: Law Enforcement Procedures +3, Street Knowledge: [City] +2

REGULAR JOB

You went to college to get a job. Then you got that job. The world needs regular people, right? Whatever job you take should be compatible with your education to this point.

REGULAR JOB

Attributes	Charisma +1, Logic +1, Willpower +1,
Skills	Leadership +1, Etiquette +1, Negotiation +1, Professional Knowledge: [Job] +1, Professional Knowledge: [Job] +2, Interest Knowledge: [Any] +1, +6 points to be spent among vocational skills relating to your job (no more than 3 ranks per skill)

SHADOW WORK (SHADOWRUNNER)

No more side trips, no more experiments. Life in the shadows is calling you, and you're diving in. There are a few specialized roles to build the skills you want (though mages should look one module further).

SHADOW WORK

[illegible]	Body +1
Roles	
Face	Charisma +1, Con +1, Influence skill group +3, Intimidation +1, Perception +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Pistols +1, First Impression quality (11)
Decker	Cracking skill group +2, Electronics skill group +2, Forgery +1, Intuition +1, Perception +1, Pistols +1, Street Knowledge: Matrix Security Procedures +4, Codeslinger quality (10)
Smuggler	Electronic Warfare +2, Etiquette +1, Gunnery +2, [Aeronautics, Automotive, or Nautical] Mechanic +2, Navigation +1, Negotiation +1, Perception +2, Pilot Aircraft +2, Pilot Ground Craft +2, Pilot Watercraft +2, Pistols +1, Sneaking +1, Street Knowledge: Border Patrol Tactics +6, Street Knowledge: Smuggler Safe Houses +6, Street Knowledge: Smuggler Routes +6
Street Samurai	Agility +1, Reaction +1, Athletics skill group +1, Blades +2, Firearms skill group +2, Heavy Weapons +1, Negotiation +1, Perception +2, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Sneaking +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Street Knowledge: Safe Houses +3, Code of Honor quality (15)
Weapon Specialist	Archery +1, Armorer +3, Chemistry +2, Close Combat skill group +2, Demolitions +1, Firearms skill group +2, Heavy Weapons +1, Negotiation +1, Throwing Weapons +1, Professional Knowledge: Blade Design +4, Professional Knowledge: Gun Design +5, Interest Knowledge: Gun Trivia +3

STREET MAGIC

You've got the magic gift, and you're taking it to the streets. Your skills are in demand, and you're happier being your own boss than you would be getting pushed around by others. It's dangerous out there, but you think you've got the skills to handle it.

STREET MAGIC

[illegible]	Willpower +1
Aspected Magician	Add +1 to the Alchemy, Conjuring, or Spellcasting skill group; Arcana +2, Assensing +2, Blades +1, First Aid +1, Survival +1, Professional Knowledge: Magical Security +3, Professional Knowledge: Small-Group Tactics +2, Street Knowledge: Magical Theory +1
Occult Investigator	Arcana +1, Assensing +3, Conjuring skill group +1, Influence skill group +1, Locksmith +1, Perception +3, Pistols +1, Sorcery skill group +2, Tracking +2, Professional Knowledge: Forensics +5, Street Knowledge: [City] +4
Eco-Shaman	Assensing +2, Astral Combat +2, Conjuring skill group +2, Demolitions +1, Etiquette +1, First Aid +1, Forgery +2, Perception +2, Pistols +1, Sorcery skill group +2, Street Knowledge: Megacorp Law +5, Street Knowledge: Magical Theory +3
Street Mage	Assensing +2, Blades +1, Conjuring skill group +2, Palming +1, Perception +1, Sneaking +1, Sorcery skill group +2, Survival +1, Street Knowledge: Charity Shelters +5, Street Knowledge: [City] +4
Street Shaman	Assensing +2, Blades +1, Conjuring skill group +3, Palming +1, Perception +1, Sneaking +1, Sorcery skill group +2, Survival +1, Street Knowledge: Charity Shelters +5, Street Knowledge: [sprawl] +4
Talismonger	Assensing +3, Chemistry +1, Enchanting skill group +3, Etiquette +2, First Aid +1, Negotiation +2, Pistols +1, Professional Knowledge: Telesma +5, Professional Knowledge: Alchemy +5

TERRORIST

Life has taken you down a dark path. You are so attached to some idea—maybe a religion, maybe a political cause, maybe something else—that you are willing to intimidate the rest of the world into adopting it. Whether by blowing things up, shooting particular people, or other violent acts, you work to inflict your views on others, knowing that if you can't win by persuasion, your best option is intimidation.

TERRORIST

Attributes	Logic +1, Willpower +1
Qualities	Criminal SIN (10)
Skills	Con +1, Demolitions +3, Disguise +2, Firearms skill group +2, Leadership +2, Palming +2, Perception +2, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Street Knowledge: [City] +3, Street Knowledge: Law Enforcement Procedures +2

THINK TANK

Once upon a time there were organizations that came up with ideas, researched concepts, and strove to uncover innovative ideas. Then some corporations discovered that rather than be incubators for new ideas, such organizations could provide academic cover for the things they wanted to do anyway. That is their primary role these days, churning out papers explaining how corporate extraterritoriality benefits everyone and explaining how cutthroat corporate tactics lead to stronger economies. There are a few outliers roaming the world, trying to talk about outdated topics like reform and equality, but they generally have trouble finding any significant funding.

THINK TANK

Attributes	Willpower +1, Logic +2
Qualities	Analytical Mind (5)
Skills	Etiquette +2, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +6, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +3, Academic Knowledge: [Any] +3; note that three different Academic Knowledge skills must be selected.

TOURS OF DUTY

Note that all of the military tours of duty noted below take a five-year commitment. Soldiers are supposed to serve as reserves for three years after that, but it is not uncommon for those who wind up in the shadows to skip out on some of those years. If you have at least Rank 5 when you start a Tour of Duty module, you are an NCO; if you have at least Rank 20, then you are an officer (see explanation of Ranks on p. 86).

TOUR OF DUTY (MERCENARY)

Maybe you've been in the military, maybe you've been in private security, or maybe you've been on the streets. In any case, you've developed a reputation as someone handy with a gun, and that has opened up some job possibilities. So you sign up for a hitch with a mercenary unit to earn some cash and some battle wounds. This module can only be taken after completing one of the other Tours of Duty or the Company Man or Shadow Work modules.

TOUR OF DUTY: MERCENARY

[illegible]	Body +1, Reaction +1, Strength +1
Basic Training (all branches)	Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Navigation +1, Professional Knowledge: Foreign Military +3
[illegible]	
Air Force	Aeronautics Mechanic +1, Armorer +1, Blades +1, Free-Fall +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Aircraft +2, Survival +1
Army	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Free-Fall +1, Heavy Weapons +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Running +1, Survival +1, Swimming +1, Throwing Weapons +1
Engineering Corps	Armorer +2, Demolitions +1, Engineering skill group +1, Gunnery +1, Professional Knowledge: Military Vehicles +3
Mage Corps	Assensing +2, Arcana +1, Conjuring skill group +1, Sorcery skill group +1
Medical Corps	Biotech skill group +2
Navy	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Gunnery +1, Perception +1, Pilot Watercraft +2, Survival +1, Swimming +1
Rigger Corps	Gunnery +2, Electronic Warfare +2, Pilot Aircraft +1, Pilot Anthroform +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1
Special Forces	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Demolition +1, Free-Fall +1, Perception +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Pilot Watercraft +1, Sneaking +1, Survival +1

TOUR OF DUTY (NAN)

You have signed on with one of the Native American Nations' armed forces, either because you wanted to for the lifestyle or the pay, or because you had an obligation after your education in one of their military academies. If you think you're going to come out of your tour with exceptional horse-riding skills, remember that it's the twenty-first century, and these militaries are more than capable of being cutting-edge.

TOUR OF DUTY: NAN

[illegible]	Body +1, Strength +1, Intuition +1
Qualities	SINner (5)
Basic Training	Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Navigation +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Professional Knowledge: NAN Military +3
Branches	
Air Force	Blades +1, Free-Fall +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Aircraft +2, Survival +1, Tracking +1
Army	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Heavy Weapons +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Survival +2, Throwing Weapons +1
Engineering Corps	Armorer +2, Demolitions +1, Engineer skill group +1, Gunnery +1
Mage Corps	Assensing +1, Blades +1, Conjuring skill group +1, Sorcery skill group +1, Survival +1
Medical Corps	Biotech skill group +2
Navy	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Watercraft +1, Survival +2, Swimming +1
Rigger Corps	Archery +1, Blades +1, Electronic Warfare +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Aircraft +1, Pilot Anthroform +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Survival +1
Special Forces	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Demolitions +1, Free-Fall +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Pilot Watercraft +1, Survival +1, Sneaking +1

TOUR OF DUTY (TIR TAIRNGIRE)

The glory, the tradition, and the forest camouflage of the Tír Tairngire military is yours. You won't know any more about the secret affairs of the Council of Princes than some slitch in a Seattle bar, but you'll still be their operative, carrying out operations whose ultimate pur-

pose you can only guess at. But you'll be paid for your trouble and might even have the chance to die for the glory of your unknown cause.

TOUR OF DUTY: TÍR TAIRNGIRE

[illegible]	Agility +1, Strength +1
Qualities	SINner (5)
[illegible]	Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Navigation +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Professional Knowledge: Peacekeepers +4
Branches	
Air Force	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Free-Fall +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Aircraft +2, Reaction +1, Survival +1
Border Patrol	Charisma +1, Armorer +1, Blades +1, Heavy Weapons +1, Perception +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Sneaking +1, Swimming +1, Survival +1, Throwing Weapons +1
Engineering Corps	Logic +1, Armorer +2, Demolitions +1, Engineering skill group +1, Gunnery +1, Professional Knowledge: Tir Military Vehicles +3
Ghosts	Willpower +1, Armorer +1, Blades +1, Demolitions +1, Free-Fall +1, Perception +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Pilot Watercraft +1, Sneaking +1, Survival +1
Mage Corps	Logic +1, Arcana +1, Assensing +2, Conjuring skill group +1, Sorcery skill group +1
Medical Corps	Logic +1, Biotech skill group +2
Navy	Blades +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Watercraft +2, Armorer +1, Perception +1, Survival +1, Swimming +1, Body +1
Netwatch	Cracking skill group +1, Electronics skill group +1, Intuition +1, Perception +1, Professional Knowledge: Matrix Threats +6
Peace Keepers	Body +1, Armorer +1, Blades +1, Clubs +1, Free-Fall +1, Heavy Weapons +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Perception +1, Survival +1, Throwing Weapons +1
Rigger Corp	Reaction +1, Electronic Warfare +2, Gunnery +2, Pilot Aircraft +1, Pilot Anthroform +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1

TOUR OF DUTY (UCAS, CAS, AND CFS)

The allure of the military called you, with the promise of low pay, rough conditions, and regular gunfire. Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time. Still, you get significant skills from your experience, a sense of discipline, and the ability to feel like you can take on just about any challenge.

TOUR OF DUTY: UCAS/CAS/CFS

[illegible]	Body +1, Reaction +1, Strength +1
Qualities	SINner (5)
[illegible]	Firearms skill group +1, First Aid +1, Navigation +1, Unarmed Combat +1, Professional Knowledge: Military +4
Branches	
Air Force	Armorer +2, Blades +1, Free-Fall +1, Gunnery +1, Pilot Aircraft +2, Survival +1
Army	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Free-Fall +1, Heavy Weapons +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Survival +1, Throwing Weapons +2
Engineering Corps	Armorer +2, Demolitions +1, Engineering skill group +1, Gunnery +1, Professional Knowledge: Military Vehicles +5
Mage Corps	Assensing +2, Conjuring skill group +1, Perception +1, Sorcery skill group +1
*Medical Corps**	Biotech skill group +2, Professional Knowledge: Medicine +3
Navy	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Gunnery +2, Pilot Watercraft +2, Survival +1, Swimming +1
Rigger Corps	Electronic Warfare +2, Gunnery +2, Pilot Aircraft +1, Pilot Anthroform +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1
Special Forces	Armorer +1, Blades +1, Demolitions +1, Free-Fall +1, Perception +1, Pilot Ground Craft +1, Pilot Watercraft +1, Sneaking +1, Survival +1, Tracking +1

** To join the Medical Corps, you must have finished the Nurse or Medicine module from Further Education.*

FINISHING OFF YOUR KARMIC BALANCE

Once you have taken all the modules you like, deduct the Karma for the various modules you have picked. This will leave a pool of Karma to finish or balance the character.

First, though, you should go through all the skills and attributes you have gained through your various module choices and add them up. The Life Modules are designed so that at this point your attributes are likely quite low, while your skills are in better shape. Attributes, then, are likely going to be a significant focus for spending the balance of your Karma. Use the tables on p. 107, *SR5*, to determine the cost of buying attributes, skills, and other elements your character might need. As with the Point Buy method, nuyen for gear can be bought at a cost of 2,000 nuyen for each point of Karma; the most Karma you can spend this way is 235. Contacts may be purchased per the rules on p. 98, *SR5*. Also note the highest-value SIN you received through the system; that SIN would supplant any other SINs received in the process.

If you received the same quality twice in the process and it cannot advance to a higher tier, select another quality of the same Karma cost. You may also buy off negative qualities you may have obtained in the process with your extra Karma, and you may pick new positive and negative qualities—but only if you are under the maximum amount of negative qualities (25 Karma total) after selecting all of your Life Modules. If you buy off negative qualities with Karma to put you under the limit, you can then acquire more negative qualities.

SAMPLE MODULAR CHARACTER GENERATION

Steve decides to build a Seattle-based shadowrunner named Trainwreck. He wants a human, costing no Karma, and he decides to settle in Seattle. This costs 15 Karma, and he adds the attribute, skills, and qualities to his stat block so that it looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2

Active Skills	Computer 1, Intimidation 1, Perception 1
Knowledge Skills	Knowledge: History 1, Knowledge: Seattle 2, Knowledge: UCAS 1,
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 1
Qualities	SINner (5)

Taking 15 from the starting pool of 750 leaves Steve with 735 Karma.

Next Steve has to think about Trainwreck's background. He decides he had a comfortable upbringing, with parents who were corporate management types. So he selects the White Collar module and makes the appropriate adjustments to his attributes and skills (no new qualities come with this particular module). He decides the Interest Knowledge [Any] +3 he receives in this module should build on the knowledge of History he already has. His adjusted stat block is as follows.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2

Active Skills	Artisan 1, Computer 1, Intimidation 1, Negotiation 1, Perception 1
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Knowledge: Seattle 2, Knowledge: UCAS 1,
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Qualities	SINner (5)

The White Collar module costs 40 Karma, leaving Steve with 695.

Next up, Steve needs to think about Trainwreck's teen years. He decides to follow the path of other famous warriors and have Trainwreck's parents killed and Trainwreck out of the street. In the back story he is developing, Trainwreck's parents were killed by gang crossfire, and Trainwreck was cast out into the streets by a corp that no longer had use for him. Steve picks the Street Kid module to represent this phase of Trainwreck's life.

Steve decides to add the Street Knowledge [City] +1 skill from this module to the Seattle knowledge he already has. The character now looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2

Active Skills	Artisan 1, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Etiquette 1, First Aid 1, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 2, Running 1
Skill Groups	Acting 2, Stealth 1
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Qualities	Bad Rep (7), Enemy (10), SINner (5)

We have 645 Karma left

Steve figures that Trainwreck's rough life keeps him out of any traditional education structures, and that instead he continues on a troubled path. He now selects the Ganger module to represent this phase of Trainwreck's life. The Criminal SIN replaces his original SIN, and his stat block is as follows:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
3	1	2	2	2	3	1	3	3

Skills	Acting skill group 2, Artisan 1, Blades 3, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Cracking skill group 1, Demolitions 1, Electronics skill group 1, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms skill group 2, First Aid 1, Heavy Weapons 1, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 1, Running 2, Stealth skill group 2, Survival 1
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Qualities	Bad Rep (7), Enemy (10), Criminal SIN (10)

We have 545 Karma left

Steve now decides that Trainwreck needs to do a better job of making a living, and perhaps hold himself to slightly higher standard, so he moves into the shadows and takes the Shadow Work module with the Street Samurai focus. There are some small complications with this. Trainwreck already had the Stealth skill group with two ranks; gaining Sneaking +1 means he breaks up that group, keeping 2 ranks for Disguise and Palming, and raising Sneaking to 3. Additionally, he already had Running 2, so getting the Athletics skill group +1 means he gets Gymnastics 1, Swimming 1, and Running moves up to 3. That makes his stat block look like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2

Active Skills	Acting skill group 2, Artisan 1, Blades 5, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Cracking skill group 1, Demolitions 1, Disguise 2, Electronics skill group 1, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms skill group 4, First Aid 1, Gymnastics 1, Heavy Weapons 2, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Running 3, Sneaking 3, Survival 1, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 1
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1, Street Knowledge: Safehouses 3
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Qualities	Bad Rep (7), Enemy (10), Criminal SIN (10), Code of Honor (15)

The Shadow Work module costs 100 Karma, leaving 445 Karma remaining.

Steve decides it's time to put the final coat of polish on his character, and he looks at his attributes first. He thinks the Body of 4 is good for now, but he thinks the Agility needs to be raised from 2 to 5 (60 Karma). He bumps Reaction from 3 to 4 (20 Karma), Strength from 2 to 4 (35 Karma), Willpower, Charisma, and Logic from 2 to 3 (15 Karma each) and Intuition and Willpower from 1 to 3 (25 Karma each). That adds up to a total expenditure of 185 Karma, bringing his total to 260. His stat block now looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	2

Active Skills	Acting skill group 2, Artisan 1, Blades 5, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Cracking skill group 1, Demolitions 1, Disguise 2, Electronics skill group 1, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms skill group 4, First Aid 1, Gymnastics 1, Heavy Weapons 2, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Running 3, Sneaking 3, Survival 1, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 1
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1, Street Knowledge: Safehouses 3
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Qualities	Bad Rep (7), Enemy (10), Criminal SIN (10), Code of Honor (15)

Now let's look at skills and groups. Steve views the Firearms skill group as essential, so he boosts it one more rank to 5, costing 25 Karma. He wants skills with a full range of weapons, so he decides to boost Heavy Weapons 2 ranks to 4, costing 14 Karma. He then boosts Gymnastics, Demolitions, First Aid, Survival, and Unarmed Combat all from 1 to 2. Each boost costs 4 Karma, so it's 20 Karma for the whole batch. He wants Trainwreck to be stealthy, so he boosts Sneaking from 3 to 5, costing 18 Karma. All of these boosts cost 77 Karma, leaving Trainwreck with 183 Karma. His stat block now looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	2

Active Skills	Artisan 1, Blades 5, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Demolitions 3, Disguise 2, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, First Aid 3, Gymnastics 3, Heavy Weapons 3, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Running 3, Sneaking 6, Survival 3, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 3,
Skill Groups	Acting 2, Cracking 1, Electronics 1, Firearms 5
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1, Street Knowledge: Safehouses 3, Street Knowledge: Gangs 6
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Qualities	Bad Rep (7), Enemy (10), Criminal SIN (10), Code of Honor (15)

We have 183 Karma left

Qualities next. We give Trainwreck Ambidextrous (4), Home Ground [Street Gangs] (10), and Guts (10), which costs 24 points, leaving us with 159 points. We also decide to buy off Criminal SIN (-10) and Bad Rep (-7), which costs 17 points and drops our total to 142 points. Trainwreck now looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	2

Active Skills	Artisan: 1, Blades 5, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Demolitions 2, Disguise 2, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, First Aid 2, Gymnastics 2, Heavy Weapons 4, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Running 3, Sneaking 6, Survival 3, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 2
Skill Groups	Acting 2, Cracking 1, Electronics 1, Firearms 5
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1, Street Knowledge: Safe Houses 3
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Positive Qualities	Ambidextrous (4), Guts (10), Home Ground [Street Gangs] (10)
Negative Qualities	Enemy (10), Code of Honor (15)

We have 142 Karma left

We use 105 points for starting resources giving Trainwreck 210,000¥ to buy vehicles, weapons, and augmentations. This now leaves us with 37 points. Contacts for Trainwreck are a Street Bum (Connection 2/Loyalty 5) named Old Charlie, from his years as a Street Kid, who helped him find shelter and food in the early days and who he kept in contact with. Johnny Razor from his Ganger days (Connection 3/Loyalty 3); Diamond, a Fixer (Connection 4/Loyalty 2); and Gunsmoke, his favorite Armorer (Connection 3/Loyalty 3). These cost 25 points and leave us with 12. Trainwreck now looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	2

Active Skills	Artisan 1, Blades 5, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Demolitions 3, Disguise 2, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, First Aid 2, Gymnastics 2, Heavy Weapons 4, Intimidation 2, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Running 3, Sneaking 5, Survival 2, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 2
Skill Groups	Acting 2, Cracking 1, Electronics 1, Firearms 5
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1, Street Knowledge: Safehouses 3
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 3
Positive Qualities	Ambidextrous (4), Guts (10), Home Ground [Street Gangs] (10)
Negative Qualities	Enemy (10), Code of Honor (15)
Contacts	Street Bum: Old Charlie (Connections 2/Loyalty 5), Ganger: Johnny Razor (Connections 3/Loyalty 3), Fixer: Diamond (Connections 4/Loyalty 2), Armorer: Gunsmoke (Connections 3/Loyalty 3),
Resources	210,000¥

We have 12 Karma left

So what to do with 12 points? We can go into the game with 7 Karma maximum, but we decide that's not for us. We will spend them on some more skill levels, improving Intimidation and Pilot Ground Craft to 3 for 6 points each, or the last 12 points from our pool. The final sheet for Trainwreck looks like this:

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG
4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	2

Active Skills	Artisan 1, Blades 5, Clubs 1, Computer 1, Demolitions 3, Disguise 2, Escape Artist 1, Etiquette 1, First Aid 2, Gymnastics 2, Heavy Weapons 4, Intimidation 3, Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Running 3, Sneaking 5, Survival 2, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 2
Skill Groups	Acting 2, Cracking 1, Electronics 1, Firearms 5
Knowledge Skills	Interest Knowledge: History 4, Street Knowledge: Seattle 3, Knowledge: UCAS 1, Street Knowledge: Safehouses 3
Languages	English (Native), Spanish 4
Positive Qualities	Ambidextrous (4), Guts (10), Home Ground [Street Gangs] (10)
Negative Qualities	Enemy (10), Code of Honor (15)
Contacts	Street Bum: Old Charlie (Connection 2/Loyalty 5), Ganger: Johnny Razor (Connection 3/Loyalty 3), Fixer: Diamond (Connection 4/Loyalty 2), Armorer: Gunsmoke (Connection 3/Loyalty 3)
Resources	210,000¥

As you can see, Trainwreck has very good Perception skills, is handy with a blade and most firearms including heavy weapons, and can even get by unarmed. With the right cyberware, he could become something of a legend on the streets.

NEW QUALITY

RANK

Rank is the way most organizations or institutions determine leadership and responsibility among their staff or members. Although it's usually associated with the military, in fact rank exists in all facets of life, including the business world and even policlubs and hobby groups. Rank provides a +1 to your social limits per level for those within your organization. In the case of military or law enforcement characters, the social limit modifier applies to members of the public over whom they have authority. In the table, the number on the right side of the slash is the cost for military or law enforcement; the number on the left side of the slash is for other ranks.

RANK TABLE

POINTS	NCO	OFFICER	BEAT	DETECTIVES	WORKERS	MANAGEMENT
5/20	[Lance] Corporal	Lieutenant	Officer	Detective	5 Year	Manager
10/25	Sergeant	Captain	Corporal	Detective Sergeant	10 Year	Area Manager
15/30	Sergeant Major	Major	Sergeant	Captain	20 Year	Regional Manager

THE MESS OF METAHUMANITY

SAPIENTS OF THE SIXTH WORLD

POSTED BY: DARIUS HAUSER SLAMM-0!
So I managed to get a friend to donate some of his baseline thesis research work for us to throw up here on our forum. Give it a read and learn a bit about the wide variety of metahumanity and overall sapient species that are out in the world today. And feel free to spice it up however you feel.

- So by "friend," he means Darius Hauser. He's a citizen of Evo working out of the University of Washington for his doctoral thesis on "Sapience in the Sixth World." And by "donate," Slamm-0! means he hacked into Hauser's home comm terminal and stole it.
- Netcat

DWARFS

PRIMARY SUBSPECIES:
HOMO SAPIENS PUMILIONIS

METAVARIANT TYPE: GNOME

Physical Characteristics: The gnome variant of the *H. sapiens pumilionis* subspecies maintains the standard thermographic vision, slightly pointed aural helix, and extended life span of the primary subspecies. Where the subspecies varies physically is in body hair, lessened height, and musculature. The gnome metavariant lacks the distinctive body hair of their primary species; in fact they lack all body hair except for head hair, which is usually dark brown or black. Though standard dwarfs are short of stature, gnomes are smaller still, with heights rarely exceeding 1.0 meter, averaging only 85 centimeters. Body masses average under 30 kilograms due to the metatype's dense musculature. This dense muscle on a smaller frame allows gnomes a strength greater than one would expect, though still less than a standard human.

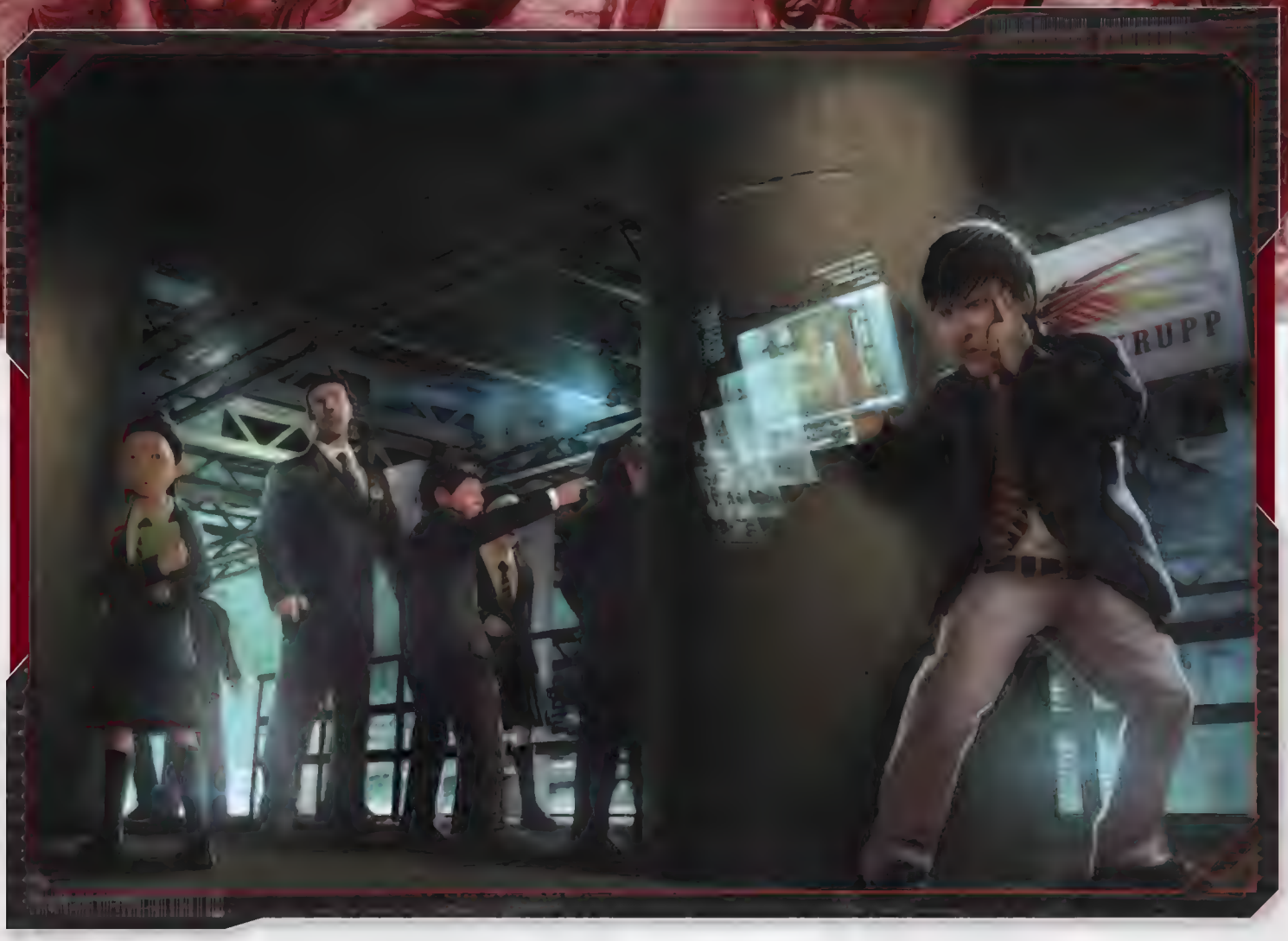
Mental Characteristics: Due to the limited population of gnomes, little comparative data from standardized testing exists. The general consensus extracted from personal interviews and data demonstrates similar psychological traits to the primary metatype. True variation lies within a resistance to arcane castings, the source of which remains to be discovered.

Cultural Characteristics: Little culture can develop in such a small population, especially one that has struggled to exist in a world not designed for their stature. Gnome births throughout Central Europe and Asia Minor, where their numbers are greatest, rarely occur in communities close enough for them to gather together. Overcoming this lack of proximity, gnomes have found niches throughout urban environments, including many in the shadows. They do, as a whole, seem to take any slight on their diminutive nature as a compliment, and as such always seem to be in a positive, even gleeful mood. With the rise of Evo—specifically its Metaergonomics subsidiary, EvoCulture philosophy, and the wireless Matrix—gnomes have benefited immensely, as these developments allow them far better access to the world around them. Due to the cost of living for those outside Evo's citizenship, the megacorporation has recently seen an increase in its gnome population.

Latest World News: Gnome abductions have seen spikes over the years, but none as large as in late 2075. Pirate Matrix site KSAF revealed the cause of this latest spike was that several Japanacorps have been abducting the gnomes to research their inherent resistance to magic. No official sources have verified the news, but investigations have been opened in several sprawls around the world.

METAVARIANT TYPE: HANUMAN

Physical Characteristics: The hanuman variant of the *H. sapiens pumilionis* subspecies varies greatly from the common metatype. Though hanuman maintain the standard thermographic vision and decreased height of the basic dwarf, they vary in several physical structures, body hair, and musculature, and have unverified longevity. Hanuman are named for the Hindu god who has some physical characteristics of a monkey, which this metavarient also possesses. The resemblance includes elongated limbs, feet, and hands; profuse lower body hair and a lack of facial hair; a greatly extended



aural helix; a prehensile tail; and an agile frame. These characteristics make hanuman excellent climbers. Not enough effort has been put into the study of their life span to determine if they have the same longevity as their parent metatype.

Mental Characteristics: The few hanuman ("hanumen" is, of course, improper usage) raised in modern surroundings demonstrate a decrease across most mental aptitudes, with consideration for their cultural variation being taken into account throughout testing. Those raised in their native culture show a greater cunning than their civilized kin, something difficult to test with standard methods.

Cultural Characteristics: Some speculate the name of the Hindu god originated from a hanuman of a previous magical cycle, but the modern incarnation bears little resemblance to a god. Most hanuman live in small tribal villages on the southern Indian subcontinent. This metavariant has existed since the Awakening—though for several decades many assumed it was an Awakened monkey species—and it exists within a strange, undefined position in the Hindu caste system. This lack of status leads hanuman that move away from their villages and attempt to integrate with the modern world while living in a social purgatory—a shadow realm that often leaves them outside the Indian Union, without a SIN, and thrust into new subcultures. Due to their frequent outsider status, hanuman often develop rebellious attitudes and earn a reputation for wildness and reckless behavior.

Latest World News: Thanks to Evo's open arms, hanuman are finally getting a fair shake. This dwarf subtype has long been recognized as a sapient race, but with so few in major sprawls, very little was known about them. With Evo's employment invitation, several thousand hanuman moved en masse to New Delhi, the Indian Union capital. Evo provided all of them with corporate SINs and employment with several subsidiaries around the city. This mass migration and arrival in New Delhi has boosted hanuman status in the sprawl, but their increased exposure and their monkey-like nature has placed them in the crosshairs of the Humanis Policlub and other racial hate groups.

METAVARIANT TYPE: KOBOROKURU

Physical Characteristics: The koborokuru variant of the *H. sapiens pumilionis* subspecies maintains the standard thermographic vision, decreased height, slightly pointed aural helix, extended life span, and increased toxin resistance of dwarfs. Where this subspecies varies is in eye shape, body hair, and musculature. The eyes are almond shaped, similar to other Western racial demographics. The body hair and facial hair of this subspecies are less abundant than the primary species, therefore decreasing the frequency of beards. The average koborokuru's muscle density and bulk is also lower than that of their primary species, and their overall muscle tone and metabolic rate are higher.

Mental Characteristics: Across standardized testing, koborokuru fall within the same general range as their parent species. Analysis of arcane potential shows a small but not insignificant increase within the subspecies. Those showing arcane potential demonstrate a high tendency toward developing split potential, commonly referred to as mystic adepts.

Cultural Characteristics: Highly shaped by a subculture of their native Japan, koborokuru entered the Sixth World to a level of ethnic persecution not seen in Japan since the Second World War. As the Awakening brought magic and creatures of myth and legend back to the world, many first-world countries saw a resurgence of religions and cultural sects that better reflected this new world. The Ainu, an indigenous people from the Japanese island of Hokkaido, had one such culture. Their mythology included the koro-pok-guru, literally "people under the leaves of the butterbur plant," who were underworld-dwelling spirits of the land. This was beneficial early on as the prevalent culture of Japan was unwelcoming to all of the emerging metatypes. The koborokuru were welcomed and revered in the Ainu mountain villages, but the seclusion in which they lived came at a price: As their population grew, they developed living conditions of extreme squalor that continue to this day. Koborokuru who are unable to join Ainu society or who were cast out for crimes have not integrated well into regular society. They maintain a streak of self-reliance and a tendency for clannish behavior that brand them as outcasts even among standard members of the *pumilionis* subtype.

Seclusion and poor treatment by Japan, the nation koborokuru would call their own, have created a culture of distrust among this metavariant. Even the opening of Yomi and the increased acceptance of magic and metahumans has done little to penetrate their separatist mentality.

Outside of Japan, koborokuru births are rare. Primarily occurring in ethnic Japanese neighborhoods within major urban sprawls, koborokuru children were originally subject to the persecution of Japanese culture. This culture often abandoned these "imperfect" or "deformed" children. Many died, some were taken by churches, and a few were raised on the streets within primarily dwarven communities. In these cases the koborokuru still fell outside the norm and developed a strong sense of separation from their parent and adopted cultures, usually falling into anti-authoritarian or anti-establishment subcultures.

Latest World News: Thanks to the new Diet in Japan, the koborokuru have gained increased acceptance across the nation. However, increased government acceptance does not always translate into universal acceptance, as racial violence on the street has increased against all metatypes in the past year.

METAVARIANT TYPE: MENEHUNE

Physical Characteristics: The menehune variant of the *H. sapiens pumilionis* subspecies maintains the standard thermographic vision, decreased height, slightly pointed aural helix, and extended life span of the primary subspecies. The subspecies varies in body hair, nasal shape, functional eye components, foot structure, and musculature. Menehune possess thicker, fuller, and more abundant body hair, including fuller eyebrows and a dense, wiry beard, which is usually lighter in color. Their noses are broader and flatter, and an additional muscular flap can seal the nostrils. Menehune possess a functional nictitating membrane that allows perfect vision underwater and protects the eyes from salt water. Their extended foot structure is thinner compared to their primary subspecies, with thick skin flaps connecting their toes. Menehune's muscle density is decreased compared to that of the basic *pumilionis*, and they possess a thin layer of insulating fat. Menehune also do not possess the inherent resistance to toxins of their primary subspecies.

The nasal muscle, nictitating membrane, webbed feet, muscle density variation, and fat layer allow the species to thrive in aquatic environments.

Mental Characteristics: Across standardized testing, menehune fall within the same general range as their parent subspecies, with the exception of their EQ, emotional quotient, which tends to be higher, likely due to their affable and compliant nature. Analysis of arcane potential shows a significant increase within the subspecies, especially in the number of adepts.

Cultural Characteristics: Menehune culture is strongly shaped by the island nations from which they have emerged. The menehune metavariant were not solely born in the Kingdom of Hawai'i but also on many of the islands around Transoceania. Their name means "Children of the Land" in Hawai'ian, but it also means "slave" in Tahitian. This variance among the lands from which the menehune arose likely points to a historical event from previous magical cycles, when these peo-

ple fled to a place of freedom. The Kingdom of Hawai'i accepts the menehune, just as they accept all metahumans, so this metavariant has not faced the racism others have confronted elsewhere. This acceptance and the nature of island life created a relaxed culture among menehune.

Latest World News: Working across many communities, menehune have secured funding from the Atlantean Foundation in their search for the island of Mu, their mythical ancestral home. Boats with Awakened navigators have been crisscrossing the South Pacific, and a recent flurry of fund-raising among the menehune indicates that a significant discovery may be near.

ORKS

PRIMARY SUBSPECIES: HOMO SAPIENS ROBUSTUS

METAVARIANT TYPE: HOBGOBLIN

Physical Characteristics: The hobgoblin metavariant shares the low-light vision trait of the *H. sapiens robustus* line but very few other characteristics. They are shorter, less muscular, and possess a smaller frame than the standard *robustus*. Along with this lessened stature, hobgoblins possesses a green skin hue and a decrease in overall body hair. Instead of enlarged lower canines and a broad jaw, hobgoblins possesses a mouthful of sharp teeth and a narrow, tapered jaw. Hobgoblin eyes are completely black, with no distinction between pupil, cornea, or sclera. The metavariant also possesses minimal body hair compared to their primary species.

Mental Characteristics: Hobgoblins demonstrate base mental limitations similar to the standard *robustus*. They possess a quicker temper, which was once considered a cultural phenomenon but has been shown to be a variation in hormone levels. The hormonal variation can also explain their enhanced scoring on EQ tests, which leaves the, with an odd combination of empathy and simmering anger.

Cultural Characteristics: Honor, anger, and vengeance—hobgoblin culture is an amalgamation of Arabian Peninsula and Central Asian cultures blended with their own temperament. Hobgoblins' natural fierceness, which matches their outward visage, has contributed to their lack of inclusion in the parent cultures of their native region, but this of course does not justify the racism and persecution they have faced. Hobgoblins have a deep sense of honor, and any slight against that honor must be answered, even slights by those who speak out against them based solely on their appearance. The resulting social exclusion has left hobgoblins on the fringes of society in ghettos primarily populated by their own kind. This exclusion has allowed the hobgoblin population to grow despite facing often violent opposition from anti-metahuman factions and hate groups in the region.

Latest World News: Hobgoblins all over western and central Asia have been showing support for an ork nation in the Mongolia region. The support has not only been verbal, but offers of mass migration have also been floating through the region's news sources. No formal names or borders have been declared, though a nomadic nation has been suggested. This would be a strange political entity, but due to the openness and sparseness of populations throughout the region, it remains possible.

METAVARIANT TYPE: OGRE

Physical Characteristics: The ogre metavariant possesses the standard low-light vision, muscular bulk, enlarged lower canines, and pointed aural helix of their primary subspecies. The variations on standard *H. sapiens robustus* come in a shorter stature, smoother skin, a protruding jaw, a wider mouth, and a stomach similar to the tin-can-eating goats of urban legend. The ogre metavariant stands at a height similar to standard *H. sapiens*, though the muscular robustness of the species is still present. Ogres seem even closer to their *H. sapiens* progenitors due the smoothness of their skin, a trait lacking in the standard *robustus*, whose skin is often thick and rough. The jawline and wider mouth of the ogre originally spawned urban legends of cannibalism; these rumors were proven false by the '40s but those raised during the era of its prevalence still feel the effects of this misconception. This urban legend was aided by the fact that ogres can digest almost anything they can swallow. The ability to digest anything leads to obesity, and even the most athletic ogres have a healthy paunch.

Mental Characteristics: Ogres fit the same spectrums of standard *robustus* in mental acuity and intellect. They fall behind in the areas of EQ when presented with personality tests but excel in tests of will.

Cultural Characteristics: Ogres have had significant trouble integrating into both regular society and the culture of their primary subspecies. False rumors of their cannibalistic nature left them ostracized from all cultures, but the initial social effects still linger after the allegations were proven false. As ogres consist of approximately thirty percent of the European ork population, most ogres have taken this social exile in stride, finding themselves a home in the Black Forest Troll Republic or settling in within the Allied German States among their own kind. Those outside the AGS usually live in solitude; their variations in appearance cause them to stand out, and their lack of acceptance keeps them on the outskirts of society or in a megacorporation's manual labor force.

- Frequently in the janitorial staff, where they can eat their fill whenever they'd like.
- Glasswalker

Latest World News: With recent changes in government, ogres from the Black Forest Troll Republic have begun seeking a way to separate from the new republic. They have are looking to claim a separate portion of the AGS within the mountains. Spokespersons for both the AGS and the Black Forest Troll Republic have refused to comment, though rumors abound that the move may gain traction if the ogres can prove a cultural connection to the area. They're seeking information from several dragons, hoping they might have memory of some bit of lost history that could help them gain their own lands.

METAVARIANT TYPE: ONI

Physical Characteristics: Oni share the same enhanced vision and muscular bulk of the basic *robustus* subspecies, but that is where the similarities end. This metavariant has variations in skin tone, eye structure, ear shape, and most notably, possesses horns similar to the *ingentis* metatype. While the base *robustus* metatype has skin tone ranges similar to that of the *sapiens* base type, oni skin tones occur in only three shades: bright red, blue, or orange—all vibrant shades and impossible to hide without a full face mask. Beyond that, oni possess protuberant eyes, a second difficult-to-hide facial feature. Adding to the oni's massive physical variation are ears with a greatly extended aural helix, similar to that of the *nobilis* metatype. An oni's horns always rise vertically from the temples instead of exhibiting the kind of variety in shape seen in *ingentis*.

Mental Characteristics: Oni seem to possess the same intellectual limitations as their primary species. This diminished intellect has been tested across both indigenous Japanese oni and those born outside Japan. While similar in intellectual level to the base metatype, oni possess, on average, a greater EQ and force of personality.

Cultural Characteristics: Oni are the dominant ork metavariant in Japan, and thus the dominant ork subtype on the island of Yomi while it was used as a place of exile for Japanese metahumans. Their very name is a reference to Japanese-folklore demons, which they resemble. Despite being subjected to segregation and racism, oni have managed to develop their own cultural identity. While exiled on Yomi, oni resurrected the culture of feudal Japan: they follow the code of *bushido* and band together as samurai, swearing themselves to lords on the island. Oni never serve as lords, instead swearing themselves to koborokuru, their dwarven Japanese counterparts. The samurai culture of the Yomi oni spread after the opening of the island, crossing over to oni who had not been sent to the island and those born to parents of Japanese ancestry around the world. Oni continue to rise from their initial demonization, even joining the ranks of Japan's Imperial Household Guard

Latest World News: With increased acceptance of metahumans in the new Diet, oni are finding themselves in the public eye far more often. Several have taken positions as security for high-ranking government officials and wear classic samurai armor adjusted with modern technologies, complete with facemasks in order to conceal the wearer's identity. This tradition has become a target of much discussion in Japan, as many see it as a way of shunning the oni behind tradition. Oni in these new positions regard the new tradition as a great honor.

METAVARIANT TYPE: SATYR

Physical Characteristics: Another *robustus* metavariant that varies greatly from the basic phenotypic characteristics, satyr maintain their low-light vision and some additional muscular bulk but vary in facial shape, leg structure, overall body mass, and the presence of horns. While satyr also seem to lack longevity similar to their primary subspecies, several cases approaching their sixtieth birthdays with no medical assistance were still spry. A satyr's face is slightly elongated at the jaw, has a more slender nose, smaller lower canines, and a greater extension of the aural helix. Satyr horns are usually short and sweep back over the head, but a wide variety of variations have been documented. The greatest difference in structure between the base *robustus* and the satyr metavariant is their leg and foot structure. Satyrs, like the creature of legend, possess caprine leg and foot structure, complete with cloven hooves. This variation gives them an interesting gait while providing exceptional running speed and enhanced vertical and horizontal jumping capabilities.

Mental Characteristics: Satyrs lack the mental limitations of their primary subspecies. They also score exceptionally well in adaptive thinking tests and have an above average EQ. These qualities have led satyrs to become one of the more well-adjusted *robustus* metavariants. In most cases, they also tend to adapt better to society at large than their primary subspecies.

Cultural Characteristics: Satyrs do not possess a culture of their own but adapt well to the surrounding cultures. Originating in the Mediterranean region, satyrs have been one of the more expansive metavariants, spreading around the globe. They often play up the part of their fun-loving legend but do not limit their personality to this particular trait. While they tend to be likable and fun, they are also hard-working. Though the world at large casts them as free-spirited and artistic, they run the gamut of professions. Satyrs, by and large, are not attracted to other satyrs and often seek partners from the range of metahumanity. Thus, satyrs tend to bear multiple offspring, some of which express as the other parent's metatype.

Latest World News: Assaults on satyrs in major sprawls are on the rise. This increase in attacks has been widespread and seems to be linked to Alamos 20k, though motives for the crimes (other than racism, of course) have not been identified. Warnings have spread through the satyr community, and high-profile satyrs often contract private security due to the threat.

TROLLS

PRIMARY SUBSPECIES: HOMO SAPIENS INGENTIS

METAVARIANT TYPE: CYCLOPS

Physical Characteristics: The cyclopean metavariant possesses the increased size and thermographic vision of the primary *ingentis* subspecies, but they have a singular eye, greater muscular bulk, minimal hair growth, and variable horn growth, and they lack dermal deposits. Cyclopes are often larger and more muscular than even the primary *ingentis*. They grow little to no hair, a trait common to both males and females. If a horn is present, cyclopes tend to develop a singular horn, but the majority of this metavariant do not grow horns at all, especially females. Cyclopes lack the distinctive dermal deposits of the *ingentis* subspecies, and their skin tends to carry a bronze hue that looks almost metallic when they perspire. The most significant variation for this metavariant is the singular eye. This eye is larger than both standard *ingentis* eyes combined and is located in the center of the forehead. This alteration leads to an altered skull and cranial shape. Studies have shown that the cyclopean brain lacks the structures necessary for processing binocular vision; while their single eye can provide limited depth perception for nearby objects, but distance evaluations remain difficult.

Mental Characteristics: The cyclopean metavariant actually scores more poorly than the base *ingentis* on standardized testing. Along with the decreased IQ, those willing to take the tests score lower overall on EQ tests. The lack of testing is a result of the cyclopean tendency for anti-social displays of aggression.

Cultural Characteristics: Cyclopean culture has been strongly influenced by their area of origin, aggressive temperament, and vision difficulties. Native to Aegean Sea islands and now spread to port cities around the Mediterranean, cyclopes have found a home by the sea, particularly on seafaring vessels and in the bars and backrooms of various ports. Desired for their size and aggressiveness both by security firms and less-savory organizations, cyclopes find work all around the Mediterranean and sometimes even further abroad. Their primarily work comes as security on local boats and dockyards. Shipping firms, small-dock shipyards, and others make use of the cyclopes' strength and hire them as manual laborers. This affinity with the sea and knowledge of at least some of the cyclopean legends has led many cyclopes to return to sea worship—more specifically, worship of Poseidon. Awakened cyclopes often follow Poseidon as a mentor, and many mundane cyclopes learn to fight with a trident, a weapon ideal for their visual limitations.

Latest World News: The all-cyclopes crew of *Eye of Poseidon* were awarded a 50,000 nuyen reward after protecting *Titan of the Seas* from a pirate attack in the Mediterranean Sea. The captain of the *Eye*, George Panagiotoupolus, told reporters that it was the least they could do, citing an event three years prior when the *Titan* towed a disabled *Eye* back to harbor after a similar pirate attack. Pirate attacks in the Mediterranean have increased drastically in the past year. *Eye of Poseidon* has been involved in several incidents with pirates, and Panagiotoupolus has stated the money will likely go to better defenses for his ship and crew.

- "Better defenses" a.k.a. BIGGER GUNS!
- 2XL

METAVARIANT TYPE: FOMORIAN

Physical Characteristics: The fomorian metavariant possess the standard thermographic vision, increased muscular bulk, pronounced horns, and enlarged lower canines of the primary subspecies. They vary in their shorter stature and lack of dermal deposits. The average fomori is only 2.35 meters in height, and ninety-five percent of the adult population falls within ten centimeters of this average. Fomori also lack the dermal deposits of the base *ingentis*, a feature that, when combined with their smaller stature, makes the metavariant appear less "monstrous" to other metahumans.

Mental Characteristics: Fomori score within similar ranges on standardized intelligence tests as the primary subspecies. They also possess the same diminished nonlinear thinking capabilities. Fomori, possibly due to the social effects of their less-frightening appearance, possess higher average EQ scores than the primary subspecies. Unfortunately, their acuity with emotions does not always translate into empathy or ethical behavior, and they are prone to emotional manipulation. Fomori have also been shown to possess a greater percentage of Awakened individuals within the population. Whether Awakened or mundane, fomori are also more resistant to arcane effects, including their own spells.

Cultural Characteristics: Fomori have had a much easier time integrating into society due to their less-imposing appearance and have therefore had little need to create their own culture. However, in some fashion they have created a societal niche that they fill nicely. In truth, fomori often act as the face of the troll community. They are frequently put in front of trid cameras, selected as leaders of troll-friendly campaigns, and hired as muscle when appearance matters as much to the client as security. This position has created no small amount of enmity between formori and the traditionally less attractive base *ingentis* and their other metavariants. Within other aspects of society at large, the history and ancestry of the fomori creates another source for cultural contributions. The metavariant has had extensive expression on the British Isles and specifically from those of Celtic lineage. Among the fomori, this has sparked a

revival of early Celtic religion, traditions, and even paths of magic. Other British-Isle cultures, particularly those in Tír na nÓg, have not received this revival well, as they see this unification as a potential threat. Because of this, many fomori who are not pushed in front of trid cameras are instead slipping into the cracks of society to hide from those who would persecute them for their new-found culture.

- I will mention here, as I have done before, that a persistent fringe theory holds that fomori are an ingentis evolution specific to the magic-rich British Isles, and possibly they came about in response to some arcane threat that existed—or still exists—there.
- Axis Mundi

Latest World News: Fomori have voluntarily participated in studies performed by Manadyne to discover the origin of their innate magical resistance. When the recent Boston quarantine went into effect, several dozen fomori in the city were lost behind the fog, along with most of the research data Manadyne had collected to date.

METAVARIANT TYPE: GIANT

Physical Characteristics: The giant metavariant possesses the same increased muscular bulk, enlarged lower canines, and thermographic vision of the primary subspecies. They possess greater height, increased epidermal density and hair growth, but they lack dermal deposits and horns. While the average *ingentis* stands 2.5 meters, the average giant measures 3.0 meters, with the tallest recorded being 3.65 meters. The increased height spreads out their increased muscular bulk, leaving them with a more slender appearance than the standard *ingentis* without any loss of strength. Instead of dermal deposits, giants possess thickened skin with a density similar to a rhinoceros and a bark-like appearance. Giants have increased facial hair thickness; most males grow full beards that are often braided or trimmed in a pattern. The giant metavariant is unique among metavariants and base metatypes in its frequency of genetic reversion to the base *sapiens* species. Studies have revealed one-fourth of female giant offspring results in a *sapiens* expression. This only occurs in females, as no male reversions have been recorded to date.

Mental Characteristics: Across the board, giants test within the same ranges as base *ingentis*. Similar to trolls, their mental acuity tends to be underestimated. That is to say, while they may average slightly lower than other metatypes on intelligence tests, they tend to be brighter than people believe they are. Thus, giants are quite capable of surprising people with mental feats that in truth are products of only average or slightly above average minds.

Cultural Characteristics: Even with strong initiatives sponsored by Evo's Metaergonomics subsidiary now in full deployment, giants still find fitting into regional society difficult. These problems are even greater than those that base *ingentis* trolls encounter thanks to giants' large size and a prevalent lack of acceptance in their home areas. As such, most giants end up unemployed and living on the fringes of society. Since this was so common in parts of the Scandinavian Union and other giant-heavy European countries, the Scandinavian Union requested Charisma Associates create a media campaign in 2071 to popularize giants. This campaign has not achieved the degree of success the corporation or government desired, but the results have benefitted the culture of giants as a whole. While the campaign looked to improve people's impressions of giants, giants themselves had little input in the program. An early big push was the Gentle Giants toy line that created a line of plush toys and an animated trid series featuring a family of giants who did good deeds and helped out people from all walks of life, always by avoiding violence. The series was a hit with everyone but giants. They found it offensive and lacking authenticity, and they pointed out discrepancies between the giants' size and the world around them. Scandinavian Union giants found the series and the government's efforts so offensive that almost all of them immigrated to the Black Forest Troll Republic in the AGS or took work with shipping megacorp Maersk. This mass migration has led European giants to join their Scandinavian kin, swelling numbers in the Troll Republic and creating some political strife within the nation.

Latest World News: The Corporate Court has formally charged Forgotten Genesis, LLC for their alleged connection to the kidnappings and subsequent genetic research of fourteen giants. Research funding shows connections to Alamos 20k and Humanis Policlub, and warrants for several members of both groups have been issued. The research apparently focused on the tendency for *sapiens* reversion, but the Corporate Court seized the research results, which are to be held until investigations are complete.

METAVARIANT TYPE: MINOTAUR

Physical Characteristics: The minotaur metavariant possesses the enhanced muscle mass and thermographic vision of the primary *ingentis* subspecies. Variance occurs in their facial and horn structures, height, body hair, and dermal deposit formation. Minotaurs get their name from their wide, flattened nasal structure, wide-set eyes, and symmetrical horns, which resemble a bull's face. Minotaur horns are longer than those of trolls, set at a more forward angle and anchored into thick bone plates that allow the horns to withstand greater impact. They are also nearly four times denser than standard *ingentis* horns. These features allow minotaurs to use their horns in more aggressive ways. Minotaurs also average 10 centimeters shorter than

trolls but tend to carry the same bulk with added width, further lending to their bullish appearance. This *ingentis* metavariant usually possesses profuse body hair and a distinct lack of the dermal deposits common to the base subspecies.

Mental Characteristics: While usually considered dim and belligerent due to their appearance, minotaurs score within the same ranges as the base *ingentis* subspecies on standardized intelligence tests. They score higher on adaptive thinking and EQ measurements on average, though the range of scores was narrower. They have a well-earned reputation of being stubborn and strong-willed, but for the most part they are regarded in a positive light by those around them, admired for their strength and bold nature.

Cultural Characteristics: Minotaurs have not developed a culture of their own. Instead they have integrated fairly smoothly into Mediterranean society, the region from which they originate. According to those interviewed in these regions, the minotaurs' strong work ethic and generally outgoing personalities facilitated this integration. Minotaurs themselves have managed to carve out a life for themselves wherever they go by calling on other minotaurs and working as a community to build or renovate homes to fit their bulk. As a demonstration of the importance minotaurs place on smoothly integrating into society, many choose to truncate their horns or wear blunt caps to limit risks to others.

- There is a smaller sect of minotaurs who find it disgraceful that their kind "mutilate" themselves for the "little people."
- 2XL

Latest World News: Minotaurs are petitioning the Greek government for a land grant for the small island of Skyros. This grant would likely be the first step in the minotaurs setting up their own sovereign nation. Sources within the government claim the legislature is considering the grant but not very seriously.

ELVES

PRIMARY SUBSPECIES: HOMO SAPIENS NOBILIS

METAVARIANT TYPE: DRYAD

Physical Characteristics: The dryad metavariant greatly resembles the standard *nobilis* subspecies with only a slight decrease in stature. They also tend to be more slender and fair-haired.

Mental Characteristics: Dryads are the most intelligent of all the *nobilis* metavariants, and they are often perceived by others to be graceful and physically attractive. Some of this perception may be magically enhanced—Awakened dryads have been known to use their powers to enhance how others perceive them. To date, no dryads have agreed take any standardized tests, meaning the only evidence we have is anecdotal, with all the problems such evidence brings with it.

- It's possible that even the technically non-Awakened dryads have some glamour about them that magically influences others. I'm still studying this.
- Winterhawk

- Studying dryads, huh? Real hardship assignment, that one is.
- Kat o' NineTales

Cultural Characteristics: Dryads are unique among metavariants in that they don't possess any particular region of origin. Each of the dozen members of the metavariant interviewed were from different regions, nations, and lineages. Two were even born to human parents in the last forty years. Dryads lack any singular culture to build from, and they lack the interconnectedness within their population to create an in-depth culture. The metavariant is drawn to natural environments, and they tend to stay away from highly polluted areas.

- The pollution avoidance, even urban environment avoidance, is because of their attunement with nature. All dryads, Awakened and mundane alike, are connected to the natural world around them: if it's sick, they're sick, and metahumanity building cities sickens the land.
- Lyran

Latest World News: The darkness of metahumanity never fails to horrify. A dryad "farm" has been located in a remote area of Amazonia. No megacorporate owner has been identified, and the Amazonian government is up in arms over the unapproved facility in their nation. For now, the location is being maintained by the Amazonians, as they take care of the resident dryad children and any pregnant females. Speculation has run rampant as to where they'll go from here. The Corporate Court has offered assistance to the Amazonian government, but Amazonia has rebuffed the Court at every turn.

METAVARIANT TYPE: NOCTURNA

Physical Characteristics: The nocturna metavariant, commonly referred to as Night Ones, possess all physical traits common to the primary *nobilis* subspecies. The metavariant's striking variations from the primary *nobilis* are in body hair growth, a less obvious increase to their auditory sensitivity, and a serious hypersensitivity to bright light that promotes a nocturnal biorhythm. The noticeable body hair is a layer of short, dark fur covering the entire body and face, similar to the *panthera* genus commonly called black panthers. This hair does not grow on the palms, bottoms of the

feet, eyelids, or genitalia. The fur is most often black but may range from deep blue to violet. Two notable specimens who claimed to have never dyed their fur possessed coats of dark green and a deep burnt orange.

Mental Characteristics: Nocturnae scored within the same intelligence ranges as the primary *nobilis*. Their EQ statistics saw a slight negative shift, and many scores are consistent with antisocial or introverted personalities. An analysis of those tested and the nocturna population overall showed a high occurrence of Awakened members, with adepts creating the bulk of the increased percentage.

Cultural Characteristics: Biologically adapted to life at night, nocturnae have faced difficulty integrating into many aspects of standard society. Despite this difficulty, nocturnae have found a place in the society of the night. They can frequently be found operating bars or working second or third shifts, especially in security and transportation, where their nocturnal alertness is a benefit. They also tend to operate on an opposite schedule from most people, so they have faced far less discrimination and animosity simply because they do not encounter others much (and people awake during the middle of the night tend to be accepting of people who may be outside standard definitions of "normal."

Latest World News: Population numbers for nocturnae show rapid growth according to the latest population studies. This growth is likely due to the expansion of nocturnae from their European origins and acceptance in sprawls around the world.

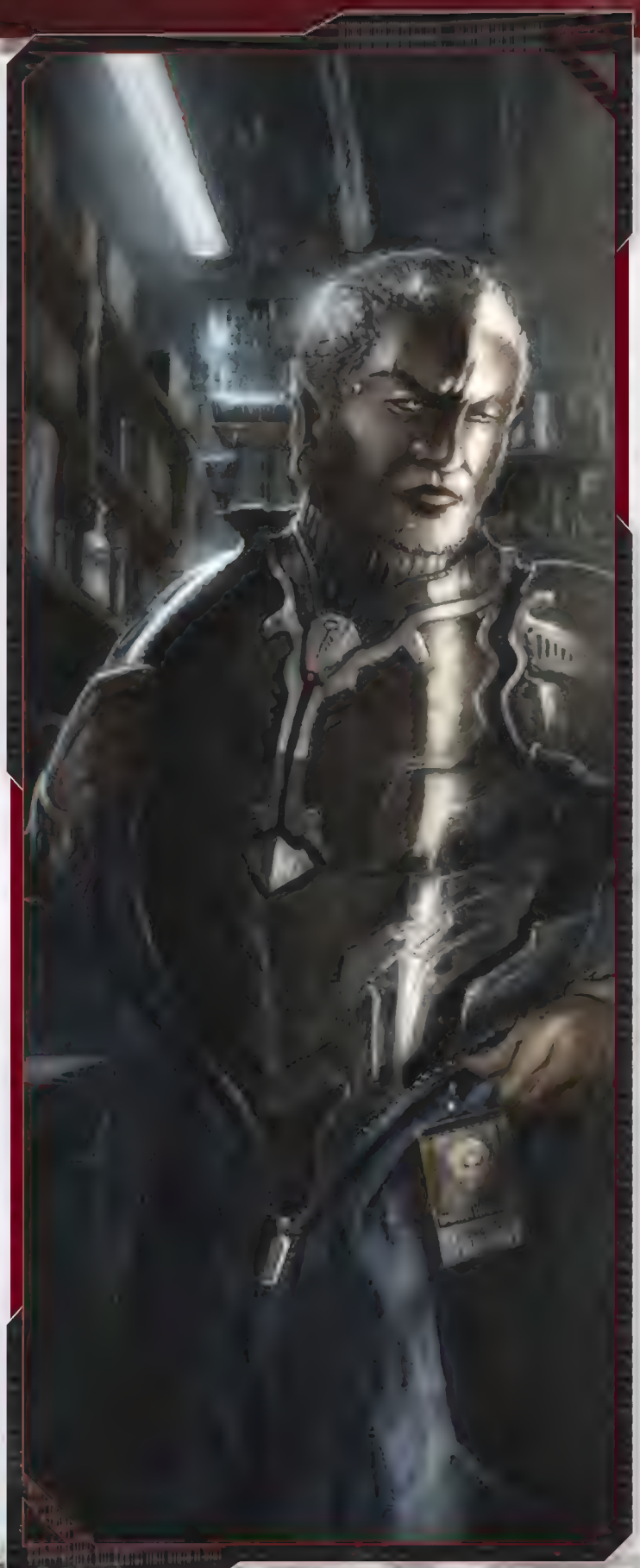
- Or it could be due to Horizon's social revamp that got them the cool nocturna name and had people stop calling them Night Ones or dark elves.
- Thorn

METAVARIANT TYPE: WAKYAMBI

Physical Characteristics: Wakyambi are remarkably difficult to analyze due to their rarity and isolated existence. They are taller and thinner than the primary *nobilis* subspecies, possess the dark skin and tightly curled dark hair common to the peoples of Africa, and tend to have less pronounced extension of the aural helix. Most accounts verify that wakyambi possess the natural low-light vision of the primary subspecies. Their increase in height is substantial over the base subspecies. Records indicate members of this metavariant can reach heights similar to the *ingentis* giant metavariant.

Mental Characteristics: Few wakyambi have undergone standardized testing, so no statistically significant results exist. Information gathered from various sources indicates a higher rate of Awakened wakyambi, but no population data or personal interviews yet exist to corroborate this supposition.

Cultural Characteristics: Wakyambi remain reclusive. They live in tribal groups in Southern Africa and have lim-



ited contact outside their own tribes. They exist as hunter-gatherers and are extremely protective of their tribal territories. According to African folklore and other, more talkative tribes in their region, wakyambi are descendants of the Sky Tribes, spoken of with different names from varying tribes in the area but all referencing something sky related: clouds, heavens, stars, the moon, etc. The legends speak of great gifts offered to the peoples of the region. Many other local tribes worship the wakyambi and protect them from outsiders, even innocents who just want to learn about this *nobilis* metavariant.

- The best info on wakyambi comes from their own mouths, when they're on their "dreamwalk." It's a one-to-five-year pilgrimage where young wakyambi leave the tribal lands to see the outside world, though running into one is rather rare. Miko Nabuto of the Lakers just finished his dreamwalk, though he spent the bulk of it playing basketball. I'm sure he'll have some great stories for the folks back home.
- Mika

- Wish I'd known that his time was up before I spent the time to hack myself a Lakers virtual season pass. If anyone is interested in watching the games from on the virtual court, PM me.
- Slamm-0!

Latest World News: Evo is looking to expand their meta-friendly reach into uncharted territory by petitioning the Zulu Nation for a parcel of land. The offer places limited control of the property and includes no extra-territoriality, but it would allow Evo's Metaergonomics subsidiary to develop items for the wakyambi.

- And learn about one of the most mysterious cultures of the Sixth World. Hopefully the Zulu see through this corporate trick and keep their land pure.
- Axis Mundi

METAVARIANT TYPE: XAPIRI THËPË

Physical Characteristics: The xapiri thëpë metavariant possesses the same primary physical characteristics of the *nobilis* metatype, with a slight decrease in their average height. The only extensive variation is in their skin. Their epidermal layer integrates patches of cells containing chloroplasts. These organelles employ chlorophyll to produce energy through plantlike photosynthesis. The patches grow with age, and some of the oldest subjects on record are completely green-skinned and claim to spend time in the sun instead of ingesting food.

Mental Characteristics: Due to communications gaps, testing thus far has been limited to visual and virtual methods, though some of the xapiri thëpë exhibit fear of electrodes. The results seem to fall within a range similar to the primary *nobilis*, though notable decreases in intellect and increases in adaptive thinking seem evident. These variances are likely due to the testing methods that cannot be completely adjusted for relevant cultural variances.

Cultural Characteristics: The xapiri thëpë people have their own culture that is completely separate from the rest of the world. They exist in a tribal society where both strength and wisdom are honored in their leaders, their elders are always given reverence, and the cycle of life seems to be the center of their religious worship. Very few xapiri thëpë ever leave tribal lands. The few that have are usually exiled, runaways, or acting as diplomats, the last being the most common. Runaways and diplomats rarely spend much time in urban environments due to the metavariant's extreme allergy to pollutants. Diplomats make their trips short, and runaways usually return within a month. Exiles are ignored and forgotten.

Latest World News: The xapiri are at war with what they call the "bloody spikes." The Sangre del Diablo trees that made a few headlines during the Azt-Am war for being extremely resistant to damage have somehow corrupted a tribe of xapiri. Members of this corrupted tribe have thorns that bleed when growing from their skin. They defend the trees, and according to rumor, the tribe is making sacrifices to the trees. Whether this really was a corruption of the tribe, a SURGE event within a tribe, or some other manifestation of magic remains to be seen.

HUMANS

PRIMARY SPECIES: HOMO SAPIENS SAPIENS

METAVARIANT TYPE: NARTAKI

Physical Characteristics: The nartaki metavariant resembles the *sapiens* base type with the exception of a variable skin color and an additional set of upper limbs. These appendages are fully functional and make the nartaki one of the few six- or eight-limbed mammals, something becoming more common but still very rare. Nartaki appear with a blue, red, or gold skin tone; each color occurs with equal frequency. All known nartaki are of Indian origin.

Mental Characteristics: Nartaki show no variation in test scores from the base *sapiens* subspecies. This testing was paired with standardized tests already present in the Indian Union, but the change in baseline caste within Indian culture had to be taken into account. Nartaki, regardless of previous station, were raised to the high Brahmin varna. This changed nartaki access to education and elevated the lifestyles of many who came from the street.

Cultural Characteristics: Nartaki do not have a separate culture per se, but Hindu culture honors them. When nartaki first appeared during the SURGE cycle of 2061, they were considered touched by the deity Shiva. Most have entered into a form of Hindu priesthood and seek to live a simple and unrestricted lifestyle.

Latest World News: A mana pulse flowing through the Ganges, similar to the one seen during the Year of the Comet, occurred during Holi celebrations and instantly boosted the nartaki population, swelling their numbers by an estimated five hundred individuals. Exact numbers couldn't be gathered since the event caused quite a stir and panic. The event had a very unique twist: All of the new nartaki are female.

METASAPIENTS

Intellectually equal but culturally shunned by the masses, many metasapients are accepted in limited numbers and on an individual basis. However, gatherings of metasapients, such as the events that created the Brocéliande Forest or the Naga Kingdom of Angkor Wat, still put the majority of people on edge.

CENTAUR

SPECIES: EQUUS SAGITTARIUS

Centaurs are a member of the equine family, with a lower body resembling a horse with a hominid torso attached where the horse head would be. A centaur typically stands 2.7–3.2 meters tall and weighs between 400–1000 kilograms. Most of the variation comes from the horse body, which may resemble several different breeds of common horse (*Equus ferus*). Centaurs possess only three digits and an opposable thumb on each hand, and the skull shape can vary within the species. The common centaur, known to metahumanity since shortly after the Awakening, has a primarily equine head similar to a horse but shortened slightly in length. A second variation of the species, much like the varieties of metahuman subspecies, has a human head. These "lesser centaurs," as other centaurs referred to them, rarely reach adulthood, as they are generally cast out of their tribes and left to fend for themselves. A few have been taken in by kind-hearted centaurs, metahumans, other metasapient species, and at least one dragon, and have survived to adulthood outside of their regular culture.

Though centaurs have long been considered primitive, this view is not entirely fair or accurate. While centaurs generally desire to maintain their simple tribal lifestyle and live in their natural habitats, they are quite capable of sophisticated thought and understanding of modern technology. Several common centaurs and many lesser centaurs have begun to explore metahuman society and demonstrated a solid facility with adapting as needed. Of particular note are the Prairie Boys, a band completely composed of common centaurs; Rouge Bitless, a lesser centaur professional fighter; and Milo Czerda, a Nobel laureate and member of the Draco Foundation's board of trustees. Other centaurs serve in mercenary units, work on rural farms, or act as guides or trackers thanks to their innate magical tracking sense. Though they are capable of integrating into many parts of metahuman society, most just choose not to.

Estimated Worldwide Population: 50,000 (common); 1,500 (lesser)

Population Centers: The Eurasian Steppe, North American refuge (created by the Great Dragon Dunkelzahn), and parts of Greece and the Czech Republic

Current International Status: The Native American Nations, Greece, the Czech Republic, Amazonia, Yakut, and Mongolia all recognize centaurs as sapient beings and allow them full citizenship. Currently Evo is the only megacorporation that offers centaurs citizenship.

NAGA

SPECIES: CUSTOS SERPENS

The Sixth World tale of the naga is one of metahuman hubris at its finest. Originally naga were thought to be an intelligent, trainable, and Awakened ten-meter-long snake species. Various security companies caught naga and trained them to work as guard animals. Little did these companies know the naga were listening and learning about metahuman society from their handlers and others they came into contact with. These interactions—including those in southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent, where the naga were often revered and worshipped in local tradition— allowed naga to gain an understanding of the new powers in the world around them. All they had to do was endure tedious, occasionally dangerous jobs.

When naga in the security firms were retired due to age or escape, many of these gathered with other naga in Asia. Meanwhile, Cambodian naga were gathering around the ruins of Angkor Wat. Tourist travel decreased with fear of the local paracritters, which were servants of the naga, and the naga were left to create a home. Barely over a decade old now, the Naga Kingdom of Angkor Wat was formed by naga and a coalition of sapient paranormal beings. Since, the naga of the world have revealed more about their nature, including their ability to speak metahuman languages with only a slight speech impediment involving hard consonants. Many naga have begun using their nation's riches to attend universities, mostly in the region around Angkor Wat due to climate restriction of their cold-blooded physiology.

Naga of differing origins often resemble the predominant snake species of the area. In Angkor Wat the various python, viper, and krait species are strongly

represented, with some of the lesser species present as well. In Amazonia the anaconda is king, and naga of this variant are often bulkier than their kin.

Estimated Worldwide Population: 190,000

Population Centers: Amazonia, Naga Kingdom of Angkor Wat, and the Indian Union

International Status: Naga hold positions of political dominance in the Naga Kingdom, and many cultures in southwest Asia revere them. They are eligible for SINs in Amazonia, the Bangla Commonwealth, Burma, the Indian Union, Laos, Malaysia, Manchuria, the Salish-Shidhe Council, Sichuan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. All of the Big Ten employ significant naga populations, typically in magical security, as do many Asian AA corporations.

PIXIE

SPECIES: INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR CLASSIFICATION

These small humanoids resemble miniature elves with wings. They bear ethnic traits from around the world, usually similar to the local metahuman population. Pixies stand under a half-meter tall, though their feet are rarely on the ground to measure them. Their wingspan measures approximately one meter across. The average pixie's wings resemble iridescent dragonfly wings, but other variations have been noted, including those mimicking the wing profiles of bats, birds of prey, butterflies, and grasshoppers, and pixies claim an even wider spectrum of wings is possible. Regardless of their wings' appearance, pixies use an innate manipulation of mana for flight instead of actual aerodynamics. They also possess the innate magical ability to conceal themselves; this seems to be their natural state, as they immediately disappear at the moment of death, which makes postmortem study and taxonomical classification of the species a challenge. Unsavory elements have attempted living autopsies, but pixies are tricky and tough catch, and those who claim to have information from such procedures are not necessarily to be trusted.

Pixies tend to live in forested areas away from cities. They group themselves by family and develop treehouse villages. On rare occasions, pixies have been known to try out life in urban sprawls. Their size is usually the most limiting factor, though variations in mana levels also affect their ability to fly and magically conceal themselves.

The Korrigan, a coalition of paranormal entities, spirits, and fey entities, are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the creation of the independent nation of Brocéliande Forest within France. Pixies are a major force in this group, providing leadership and direction (insofar as this loose gathering allows itself to be led).

Estimated Worldwide Population: Unknown

Population Centers: Brocéliande Forest (Brittany region of France), United Kingdom, Tír na nÓg, Tír Tairngire, Ukraine, Duchy of Pomoyra, and the Black Forest Troll Republic

International Status: France is the only nation that issues permanent SINs to pixies; the governments of Tír Tairngire, the United Kingdom, Tír na nÓg, and the UCAS issue criminal SINs to pixies convicted of a crime. Neo-NET and Evo are the only megacorporations with pixie corporate citizens.

- They don't just live in treehouses. Those little houses usually have a secret door that leads to a tunnel down through the tree trunk and into the ground, where they have built entire underground cities.
- Plan 9

- Speaking of criminal SINs and trying to fit in, Ashindar, a black-feathered pixie, was caught by the government ofTír Tairngire and convicted of murder after his assassination of a Telestrian exec. He killed the exec using an assault cannon, or so the media depictions seemed to show. The weapon was actually a small-caliber rifle, custom modified to fit his diminutive stature. He escaped custody shortly after the trial.
- Chainbreaker

- He let himself get caught. It was a message: Stay out of Brocéliande Forest.
- Thorn

SASQUATCH

SPECIES: PESVASTUS PILOSIS

The Fifth-World legends of Bigfoot were true. Either sasquatches were born before the Awakening or they are just a long-lived race able to hide for millennia. Sasquatches have never revealed the truth and likely never will. These sapient paranormal beings stand three meters tall and possess a muscular build similar to trolls. They are covered in fur that can be black, brown, pale yellow, or auburn; this fur develops silver tips with age. A sasquatch's native region usually determines their color, coloring the creature to provide the best camouflage based on the environment. Sasquatches are omnivorous but lean toward food that doesn't run away, though in the Sixth World that doesn't necessarily disqualify some plants. Though they lack the ability to speak—the concept of a spoken language is foreign and incomprehensible to them—sasquatches have an amazing ability to mimic audio sounds, which they use when hunting.

Sasquatches have been remarkably successful at entering metahuman society when they choose, with work often found in entertainment and politics. Some use audio mimicry ability to create sounds for trids and simflicks; others act as diplomats and ambassadors to other sapient paranormal beings.

Estimated Worldwide Population (2075): 40,000

Population Centers: The Native American Nations, Nepal, Tibet, the UCAS, and Yakut

International Status: The United Nations recognized sasquatches as a sapient species in 2042. Sasquatches are eligible for SINs in most nations and megacorporations.

SHAPESHIFTERS

Shapeshifters are not what many people assume they are. Common belief is shapeshifters are metahumans able to transform into animals, but this is backwards. Shapeshifters are actually sapient paranormal animals with metahuman intelligence and the innate magical ability to assume a metahuman form. Their natural forms are nearly identical in appearance to their mundane counterparts, though they are usually more physically impressive. This metahuman form often bears distinctive traits that can be used to identify a shapeshifter when in metahuman form, though this is not an exact science. For example, many humans with excessive body hair and a bit of flab over their massive muscles are not in fact Ursine shifters.

A shapeshifter's lifespan differs greatly from that of a mundane metahuman. Shifters were originally thought to have life spans similar to orks, but more recent studies reveal this to be a shortsighted assessment. The true lifespan appears to be greater than the base animal, but no greater pattern has been determined. Unsurprisingly, as shifters can breed with and originate from the same species, genetics tests reveal very little difference between the base animals and their shapeshifter kin.

Though every animal species could potentially possess shapeshifters, a few breeds are relatively common. These are divided into several broad categories with similar identifying features in their metahuman forms. However, perceptions should not be limited to these identifiers, as shapeshifters run the gamut of Earth's species. To date, no shapeshifters have originated from any Awakened animal species.

Individual shapeshifters have been able to integrate into metahuman society, but they have no overall shapeshifter culture. Each breed has a species-specific culture, but those cultures are part of their animal lives, not their metahuman life, and they don't share that aspect with other metahumans.

Estimated Population (Worldwide): 200,000 (divided among various species)

Population Centers: Amazonia, Azania, Aztlan, Salish-Shidhe, Yakut

International Status: The NAN states, Amazonia, Azania, and Aztlan recognize shapeshifter sapience and issue them SINs when they come in from the wild. Many countries that are not United Nations members consider shapeshifters dangerous animals and offer bounties for their destruction. The Awakened Yakut, a former Russian republic now in the control of militant Awakened forces, is the only nation with a strong political force of shapeshifters.

Bovine: Cows, bison, cape buffalo, brahmin, and other similar animals from around the world. Broad noses with flaring nostrils and broad shoulders tend to be the only universal similarities in the human forms.

Canine: Many a dog owner has been surprised to learn their pet understands them far more than they realize. Medium and large breed dogs are the only known shapeshifters—no poodle or chihuahua shifters have been discovered yet. Enlarged canines, extensive body hair, and a resemblance to their breed are the usual markers of a shapeshifter of *Canis familiaris*.

Equine: A drawn-out chin and long features are common on the faces of equine shapeshifters. Their hairline also frequently extends down between the shoulder blades, with the lower portion growing in a narrow strip, much like a mane.

Falconine: Various bird of prey shapeshifters—vulture, eagle, falcon, hawk, etc.—can be found throughout the world. They typically have dark eyes, sharp features, and a tendency to exhibit claustrophobia.

Leonine: Due to the dwindling lion population, leonine shapeshifters are a rare breed. Most are from, and rarely leave, the southern African nation of Azania. Thanks to the protection of the great dragon Mujaji, leonine numbers grew for a decade, but the dragon civil war took a toll. Current figures put the population below even the numbers they had a decade ago. In human form, leonines typically have tawny hair, a striking contrast to their dark southern African complexion.

Lupine: These shapeshifters are found throughout the Northern Hemisphere, "wherever wolves may roam." Their metahuman form possesses prominent eyebrows and hairy hands, particularly the palms and knuckles.

Pantherine: This covers a wide range of mid-size great cats including the jaguar, leopard, puma, and ocelot. These shapeshifters can be found all around the world. Many are worshipped and greatly honored by local cultures in their native environment. Even first-world nations, such as Aztlan, have a place for them. Jaguar shapeshifters are idolized by many citizens for their place in native mythology. Amazonia is said to have jaguar shapeshifters in their intelligence services. Pantherine shapeshifters in human form retain the catlike iris and reflective layer in their eyes, and many possess traces of their natural coat pattern in their hair and skin.

Tigrine: These shapeshifters can be found all over central and eastern Asia. As with pantherine shifters, their metahuman form usually retains their catlike eyes and natural hair color with some hint of their natural stripes as streaks. Those living in and around the various Chinese states usually maintain a low profile as they are hunted for their parts, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Ursine: Bear species can be found throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Metahuman forms have exces-

sive body hair and tend to be robust, with layers of fat over solid muscle.

Vulpine: The fox breed is primarily native to Japan and China, though a few rare instances have appeared in Europe and North America. A unique trait of the metahuman form is the retention of the fox tail, which the vulpine will sometimes cover with long coats or robes.

CHANGELINGS

In 2061, the passing of Halley's Comet changed the face of metahumanity forever—in some cases, quite literally. First UGE (Unexplained Genetic Expression) brought elves and dwarfs to the Sixth World, then Goblinization gave us orks and trolls, and finally the comet triggered SURGE (Sudden Unexplained Recessive Genetic Expression), which exposed the world to the changelings. Changelings are not a metatype of their own but a metagenic expression that sprang up across the globe, seemingly at random. In the years since, researchers have discovered that some events had a method, while others remain a mystery. For example, the ganesha, elephant-headed people that arose from the Ganges River event, reflect the beliefs of the local populations, while a clerk from the accounting department of a small business suddenly growing blue fur, a tail, and bat ears seems completely arbitrary. Research has explained that the changes were caused by metagenic traits that were damaged over millennia of natural selection, cross-genetic input from viruses or gene therapy, genetic drift and spread, assimilation, dysfunctional repair systems, and mutation by environmental factors such as radiation, pollution, and chemicals. This damaged coding required a certain spike in mana to activate, which first occurred en masse when Halley's Comet swung by and threw the Gaiasphere for a loop. Another round of SURGE occurred a few months later when the comet made its second pass. A third major SURGE event has yet to occur, but that does not mean that new changelings are not appearing—or that there is not a new event waiting to cause a new spike and accompanying SURGE.

Several locations around the globe have highly fluid mana levels, and occasional mana spikes occur randomly. If the right person with the right genetic code is in the right place at the right time, that individual might express. Those who wish for the changeling life—mostly disgruntled teens hell-bent on avoiding the corporate leash they fail to realize is already around their necks— make pilgrimages to these locations, hoping to experience SURGE. Some do, some don't, some keep trying, some accept their mundane fate, and some suddenly change a week, a month, or a year later. As expected, there are some people who profit from this by claiming to know how to identify changelings pre-change, but the best scientific and arcanological minds of our time have found no way to know.

Once a change has occurred, there is a chance a changeling trait will pass on to offspring. The few studies performed show that genes pass on within the standard range for primary genetic traits. Thus far all traits discovered are autosomal and not linked to specific sex chromosomes. A changeling's offspring can exhibit some of the traits of either or both parents, or a plain human baby can result as well.

When looking at pre-change demographics for changelings, humans are the most likely to SURGE (59 percent), followed by orks (16 percent), trolls (10 percent), dwarfs (9 percent), and elves (6 percent). Those who have SURGEd are separated into three basic categories based on the extent of their change, though these categories are beginning to blur and shift over time.

Class I changelings have a few select traits, usually associated with metatypes other than their own, such as pointed ears, tusks, thermographic vision, or dermal deposits. Some Class I expressions exhibit traits unknown in other metatypes, but due to the minor nature of the changes they are classified here.

Class II changelings express a wider breadth of alternative phenotypic expressions, many of which are found outside metahumanity. Expressions can include traits normally limited to other mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and even fish. These traits can be strictly phenotypic, but many generate functional organs such as gills. Class II expressions are usually focused within a single classification of creature, but recent breeding between changelings has created several hybrids.

Class III changelings are the most radically different from their initial metatype, often to the point of seeming like an entirely different species. Like Class II, expressions are usually focused within a single classification of creature, but changes are extreme. Most changes are so extreme that surviving them should not have been possible, but the mana-induced portion of the metamorphosis allowed these massive physiological changes to occur. That said, the mind does not always come through so intact, leaving many Class III changelings with mental health issues. Breeding between Class III changelings of different animal phenotypes has produced a larger number of early miscarriages, further promoting the concept of differing species. Few Class III-born changelings are old enough to have reached puberty, and none have been subjected to further testing.

- That he knows of.
- Plan 9

CREATING SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Sometimes you just want to be a little different, and sometimes you want to be a blue ork with horns and bulging eyes. This section is for the latter. Metavari-

AN EVER-CHANGING SOCIETY

With every new metatype, virus, paranormal animal, and metasapient discovered, the fear and panic of those who cannot handle change swiftly follows. The arrival of changelings into the world was no different. In 2061–62 a worldwide panic led many to believe this latest evolution was the end of metahuman as we know it. By 2063, the changeling Kitty Kat was hosting her own talk show, Kat Chat, and the media was eating up every furry, scaly, beastly, freaky changeling they could find and parading them in front of the camera. In 2065, Crash 2.0 put so-called furries on the back burner for a while until Yamatetsu rebranded itself as Evo and the spotlight turned to all things "different." This spotlight narrowed quickly as it focused on the megacorp rather than its citizens, and changelings fell back into the dim edge of Evo's spotlight. They stayed in that dimness for the better part of a decade during the wireless revolution, the technomancer scare, and the tempo crisis.

In 2072, changelings finally stepped back into the spotlight as major proponents for metasapient rights, and their reappearance rekindled the public's fascination with metagenics. Many volunteered for studies to determine how their traits could be duplicated in others through gene therapy, in hopes of creating new races and "more people like them." All such research met with little success. When hostilities between the dragons started to heat up, hate groups targeted changelings alongside other metahumans and metasapients, forcing them to pull back from the public eye. The recent issues with gene therapy being linked to psychological disorders has led to a reduction in that branch of research. Most changelings have found life to be relatively safe in one of two places: beneath Evo's corporate umbrella or tucked away in the dark corners of the sprawls. In time they might gain another resurgence of acceptance and idolization, but for now they live in a world that doesn't understand them and, at the moment, is not inclined to try.

ants, metasapients, and changelings are all presented for your perusal, your gamemaster's approval, and your eventual demise, because sticking out like a sore thumb in the shadows is just asking to get hammered. So grab a character sheet, build yourself a freak, and enjoy the ride!

CREATING A METAVARIANT CHARACTER

Character creation for metavariant, metasapient, and shapeshifter characters follows the same procedures as for the standard metatypes, with only one small change. Some of the options require part of the character's starting Karma to be spent just to allow for the additional abilities these characters will possess. On the other hand, a few metavariant options end up giving the character a little extra Karma to spend. This extra Karma counts toward the Karma limit allowed for Negative Qualities. The Karma cost for playing a certain option does not count against the character's Positive Quality limit, though. Some of the options require taking a few Negative Qualities just to afford the Karma buy-in, but it may well be worth it to play an Ursine shapeshifter with the metahuman form of a giant. Because awesome.

Metasapients and shapeshifters who select Priority A, B, C, or D for Magic have their natural Magic of 1 replaced with their new Magic attribute. Character options that have a natural Magic attribute cannot also have a Resonance attribute and thus cannot select that option during character creation. Special attribute points can be used to increase the natural Magic attribute of a metasapient or shapeshifter, and the attribute can also be increased through Karma purchase as part of normal character advancement. If a character's Magic is reduced to 0 through Essence loss, they cannot use any abilities tied to Magic per the rules on p. 278, *SR5*.

CREATING A SHAPESHIFTER

When making a shapeshifter character, the player creates the animal first. The attributes listed in the table are for the natural animal form. To determine their metahuman attributes, the player must simply note how many attribute points were put into each attribute, and those are applied to the base metahuman attributes as well. At character creation the shapeshifter chooses a metahuman form and pays for it with Karma. This Karma is in addition to the Karma cost for playing certain shapeshifter species. Human is the default and costs nothing. Metatypes and metavariants are listed with costs in the Shapeshifter Metahuman Form Cost Table. Certain metavariants have some very unique characteristics that do not translate to the metahuman form of a shapeshifter. These are also noted in the table.

Once character creation is complete, the attributes are treated as separate scores. If a player increases their shapeshifter character's natural Strength attribute, the Strength of the metahuman form does not change, and vice versa. Racial traits are a special case. Most transfer from the natural form to metahuman form, with the exception of Natural Weapon (Bite) and Goring Horns (unless the character is a troll or other variant that naturally has horns large enough for goring). Natural Weapon (Claws) takes the form of extremely hard and sharp fingernails and toenails.

Negative Qualities, such as Uneducated, can be bought off with Karma, but a good reason is needed. For

example, canine shifters do not have the Uneducated quality because they live among people and learn right alongside them. Buying off this quality would require a similar story, such as a shifter who was a mascot at a college, or a trained ursine, tigrine, or falconine learning while their handlers are not looking.

All shapeshifters have an Edge attribute range of 1 to 5.

CREATING A CHANGELING

SURGE can happen to anyone and anything. Creating a changeling character requires the player to choose a level of SURGE: Class I (10 Karma), Class II (15 Karma), or Class III (30 Karma). The chosen class indicates the Karma limit of chosen metagenic qualities and determines the variability of SURGE characteristics for the character. Select one of three class options to determine the actual Karma cost of this variation. The three options are based on how much control a player wants in the effects of the character's SURGE. Players with Class III characters get to select the full range of qualities, both positive and negative, for the character. Players with Class II characters select the Positive Qualities to the Karma level of their choice; they then must roll Negative Qualities randomly to balance out the Positive Qualities selected. Players with Class I characters select all qualities randomly. They initially should roll random Positive Qualities until they have what they believe to be a sufficient amount (maximum Karma value of these qualities is 30). They then randomly roll Negative Qualities to balance out the Positive Qualities.

When a player selects Positive and Negative Metagenic Qualities, the combined Karma values need to either balance exactly or err in favor of a single point of Karma on the Positive Quality side of the balance; the player must pay for the imbalance with Karma from their free Karma pool.

Gamemasters are allowed some leeway when it comes to selecting metagenic qualities for an NPC. She can either select the ones she would like the character to have for the purposes of story, campaign, or character background, or she can roll on the Metagenic Qualities Table.

In any case, the player or gamemaster has to remember the general rule of each Class of SURGE. Class I SURGE can be totally random but is limited to metahuman and minor animal qualities; there is no need to connect the Positive and Negative Qualities to the same metatype or animal classification. Class II SURGE is more diverse and includes traits found outside the metahuman spectrum; again there is no need to connect Positive and Negative Qualities, though it tends to be more likely. Class III SURGE runs the gamut, though the majority have traits that all reflect a similar theme, such as catperson, lizardperson, birdperson, etc.; thus the Positive and Negative Qualities should all relate to the overall theme.

EXAMPLE

CREATION EXAMPLE

Scott really wants to play a lizardman for his next character. He goes with the street name Gilaman and decides that a Class III SURGE is his only option. He's willing to pay the 30 Karma so he can choose all of his features. He selects the following:

Positive Qualities

Claws: 5 Karma
Camouflage: 4 Karma
Functional Tail (Prehensile): 4 Karma
Gills: 4 Karma
Webbed Digits: 4 Karma
Underwater Vision: 3 Karma
Total: 24

Negative Qualities

Berserker: 6 Karma
Scales: 5 Karma
Astral Hazing (non-Awakened): 5 Karma
Scent Glands: 4 Karma
Total: 20

The Positive Qualities cost more than the Negative Qualities by too large of a gap. If Underwater Vision is removed, the Positive Qualities still outweigh the Negative Qualities, but only by a single point of Karma. Scott has the following options: remove one of the 4-Karma Positive Qualities to be at 20 Karma; take another Negative Quality of 4 Karma or less and then pay for the difference in Karma; or remove Underwater Vision and pay 1 Karma for the difference in costs.

METASAPIENT ATTRIBUTE TABLE

METAVARIANT	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	WIL	LOG	INT	CHA	EDG
Gnome	1/4	2/7	1/6	1/4	2/7	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6
Racial Traits: +20% increased Lifestyle cost, Arcane Arrester (2), Neoteny, Thermographic Vision									
Hanuman	1/6	2/7	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/5	2/7	1/5	1/6
Racial Traits: +20% increased Lifestyle cost, Monkey Paws, Prehensile Tail, Thermographic Vision, Unusual Hair (Body)									
Koborokuru	2/7	1/6	1/6	2/7	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6
Racial Traits: +20% increased Lifestyle cost, Celerity, Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins, Thermographic Vision, Unusual Hair									
Menehune	2/7	2/7	1/5	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6
Racial Traits: +20% increased Lifestyle cost, Resistance to Pathogens, Thermographic Vision, Underwater Vision, Webbed Digits									
Dryad	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/5	1/6	1/6	1/6	3/8	1/6
Racial Traits: Glamour, Low-Light Vision, Symbiosis									
Nocturna	1/5	3/8	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	2/7	1/6
Racial Traits: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Low-Light Vision, Keen-eared, Nocturnal, Unusual Hair (Colored Fur)									
Wakyambi	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/5	2/7	1/6	1/6
Racial Traits: Celerity, Elongated Limbs, Low-Light Vision									
Xapiri Thëpë	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/5	1/6	2/7	1/6
Racial Traits: Allergy (Pollutants, Mild), Low-Light Vision, Photometabolism									
Nartaki	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	2/7
Racial Traits: Shiva Arms, Striking Skin Pigmentation									
Hobgoblin	3/8	1/6	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/5	1/6	1/5	1/6
Racial Traits: Fangs, Keen Eared, Low-Light Vision, Poor Self Control (Vindictive)									
Ogre	4/9	1/6	1/5	3/8	2/7	1/5	1/6	1/4	1/6
Racial Traits: Low-Light Vision, Ogre Stomach									
Oni	3/8	2/7	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/5	1/6	2/7	1/6
Racial Traits: Low-Light Vision, Striking Skin Pigmentation									
Satyr	2/7	1/6	2/7	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/5	1/6
Racial Traits: Low-Light Vision, Satyr Legs									
Cyclops	5/10	1/5	1/6	6/11	1/6	1/4	1/5	1/4	1/6
Racial Traits: +100% increased Lifestyle costs, Cyclopean Eye, +1 Reach, Thermographic Vision									
Fomorian	4/9	1/5	1/6	5/10	1/5	1/4	1/4	1/5	1/6
Racial Traits: +100% increased Lifestyle costs, Arcane Arrester (1), Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach									
Giant	5/10	1/5	1/5	5/10	1/6	1/5	1/5	1/5	1/6
Racial Traits: +100% increased Lifestyle costs, Dermal Alteration (Bark), Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach									
Minotaur	6/11	1/5	1/6	5/10	1/6	1/5	1/6	1/4	1/6
Racial Traits: +100% increased Lifestyle costs, Goring Horns, Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach									

METASAPIENT ATTRIBUTE TABLE

METASAPIENT	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	WIL	LOG	INT	CHA	EDG	MAG
Centaur	3/8	1/6	1/6	3/8	1/6	1/6	1/5	1/5	1/5	1
Racial Traits: +150% increased Lifestyle costs, Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision, Magic Sense, Natural Weapon (Kick: DV (STR + 2)P, AP +1, +1 Reach), Search; Movement (x1/x4/+4)										
Naga	3/8	1/4	2/7	4/9	2/7	1/6	1/6	2/7	1/5	1
Racial Traits: +150% increased Lifestyle costs,Armor 8, Cold-Blooded, Dual Natured, Guard, Movement (x1/x4/+1; x2/x6/+2 swimming), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 1)P, AP –2, Reach –1), Venom										
Pixie	1/2	3/8	3/8	1/2	3/8	2/7	2/7	3/8	2/7	1
Racial Traits: +100% increased Lifestyle costs, Astral Perception, Concealment (Self Only), Uneducated; Movement (x1/x2/+1; x2/x6/+2 flight), Vanishing (Only Upon Death)										
Sasquatch	6/11	1/6	1/6	5/10	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1
Racial Traits: +100% increased Lifestyle costs, Dual Natured, Mimicry, Movement (x2/x4/+2), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV (STR + 1) P, AP —, +1 Reach), Uneducated										

SHAPESHIFTER ATTRIBUTE TABLE

SHAPESHIFTER	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	WIL	LOG	INT	CHA	EDG	MAG	INI
Bovine	3/8	1/4	1/4	4/9	1/6	1/5	1/6	1/6	1/5	1	+1D6
Racial Traits: Goring Horns, Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated; Movement (x1/x4/+1m)											
Canine	1/5	1/6	2/7	1/5	2/7	1/5	2/7	2/7	1/5	1	+1D6
Racial Traits: Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV [STR + 1]P, AP –1), Shift (Metahuman Form), Vomeronasal Organ; Movement (x2/x6/+3)											
Equine	4/9	1/4	1/6	5/10	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/5	1	+1D6
Racial Traits: Keen-eared, Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated; Movement (x1/x4/+4)											
Falconine	1/4	2/7	3/8	1/4	1/6	1/5	2/7	2/7	1/5	1	+2D6
Racial Traits: Hawk Eyed, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 2)P, AP –1, Reach –1; Talons: DV (STR)P, AP —), Shift (Metahuman Form); Movement (x1/x2/+0.5m; x2/x6/+2 flight); Uneducated											
Leonine	3/8	1/6	2/7	4/9	1/5	1/4	2/7	2/7	1/5	1	+2D6
Racial Traits: Balance Receptor, Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 1)P, AP –1; Claws: DV (STR + 1)P, AP –1, Reach +1), Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated; Movement (x2/x5/+2)											
Lupine	1/6	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/5	2/7	2/7	1/5	1	+2D6
Racial Traits: Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 1)P, AP –1), Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated, Vomeronasal Organ; Movement (x1/x5/+3)											
Pantherine	2/7	2/7	2/7	1/6	1/6	1/5	3/8	3/8	1/5	1	+2D6
Racial Traits: Balance Receptor, Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 2)P, AP –3; Claws: DV (STR + 1)P, AP —), Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated; Movement (x1/x5/+2)											
Tigrine	3/8	2/7	2/7	3/8	1/5	1/4	3/8	2/7	1/5	1	+2D6
Racial Traits: Balance Receptor, Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 2)P, AP –2; Claws: DV (STR + 1)P, AP –1, Reach +1), Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated; Movement (x1/x5/+2)											
Ursine	6/11	1/5	1/5	7/12	1/5	1/5	1/6	1/6	1/5	1	+1D6
Racial Traits: Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Keen-Eared, Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 2)P, AP –2; Claws: DV (STR + 3)P, AP –1, Reach +1), Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated, Vomeronasal Organ; Movement (x1/x3/+2)											
Vulpine	1/4	2/7	1/6	1/4	1/6	1/5	2/7	2/7	1/5	1	+2D6
Racial Traits: Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasonic), Keen-Eared, Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR + 1)P, AP —), Shift (Metahuman Form), Uneducated, Vomeronasal Organ; Movement (x1/x3/+2)											

EXTENDED 'A' PRIORITY CHART

METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST	METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST
Nartaki (8)	0	Cyclops (5)	2
Dryad (8)	0	Fomorian (5)	12
Nocturna (8)	0	Giant (5)	2
Wakyambi (8)	12	Minotaur (5)	2
Xapiri Thëpë (8)	0	Centaur (6)	25
Gnome (7)	7	Naga (4)	25
Hanuman (7)	5	Pixie (6)	15
Koborokuru (7)	0	Sasquatch (5)	20
Menehune (7)	2	Shapeshifter [Bovine; Vulpine] (8)	5
Hobgoblin (7)	5	Shapeshifter [Canine; Falconine] (7)	10
Ogre (7)	8	Shapeshifter [Lupine; Equine] (6)	15
Oni (7)	4	Shapeshifter [Ursine; Leonine] (4)	20
Satyr (7)	10	Shapeshifter [Pantherine; Tigrine] (4)	25

EXTENDED 'B' PRIORITY CHART

METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST	METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST
Nartaki (6)	0	Cyclops (0)	2
Dryad (6)	0	Fomorian (0)	12
Nocturna (6)	0	Giant (0)	2
Wakyambi (6)	12	Minotaur (0)	2
Xapiri Thëpë (6)	0	Centaur (3)	25
Gnome (4)	7	Naga (2)	25
Hanuman (4)	5	Pixie (3)	15
Koborokuru (4)	0	Sasquatch (2)	20
Menehune (4)	2	Shapeshifter [Bovine; Vulpine] (6)	5
Hobgoblin (4)	5	Shapeshifter [Canine; Falconine] (5)	10
Ogre (4)	8	Shapeshifter [Lupine; Equine] (4)	15
Oni (4)	4	Shapeshifter [Ursine; Leonine] (2)	20
Satyr (4)	10	Shapeshifter [Pantherine; Tigrine] (2)	25

EXTENDED 'C' PRIORITY CHART

METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST	METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST
Nartaki (4)	0	Oni (0)	+4
Dryad (3)	0	Satyr (0)	10
Nocturna (3)	0	Centaur (0)	25
Wakyambi (3)	12	Naga (0)	25
Xapiri Thëpë (3)	0	Pixie (0)	15
Gnome (1)	7	Sasquatch (0)	20
Hanuman (1)	5	Shapeshifter [Bovine; Vulpine] (4)	5
Koborokuru (1)	0	Shapeshifter [Canine; Falconine] (3)	10
Menehune (1)	2	Shapeshifter [Lupine; Equine] (2)	15
Hobgoblin (0)	-5	Shapeshifter [Ursine; Leonine] (0)	20
Ogre (0)	8	Shapeshifter [Pantherine; Tigrine] (0)	25

EXTENDED 'D' & 'E' PRIORITY CHARTS

METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST	METATYPE (SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE POINTS)	ADDITIONAL KARMA COST
Nartaki (2)	0	Wakyambi (0)	12
Dryad (0)	0	Xapiri Thëpë (0)	0
Nocturna (0)	0		
'E' PRIORITY			
Nartaki (1)	0		

SHAPESHIFTER METAHUMAN FORM COST

FORM	KARMA COST	ABILITIES NOT PRESENT
Dwarf	8	
Gnome	0	Arcane Arrester (2)
Hanuman	13	
Koborokuru	8	
Menehune	10	
Elf	5	
Dryad	2	Glamour
Nocturna	9	
Wakyambi	15	
Xapiri Thëpë	3	Photometabolism
Human	0	
Nartaki	0	
Ork	10	
Hobgoblin	10	Poor Self Control (Vindictive)
Ogre	13	Ogre Stomach
Oni	16	
Satyr	20	
Troll	20	
Cyclops	15	
Fomorian	18	Arcane Arrester (1)
Giant	20	Dermal Alteration (Bark)
Minotaur	20	Goring Horns (except bovine shapeshifters)

RANDOM METAGENIC QUALITIES

To randomly determine metagenic qualities, first roll 1D6 and consult the Random Positive Karma Value table. Then consult the table with the appropriate Karma range and roll the amount of dice listed to see what quality has been assigned to your character. Then roll 1D6 and consult the Random Negative Karma Value table and follow the same process to randomly select Negative Qualities.

RANDOM POSITIVE KARMA VALUE

DICE ROLL	KARMA RANGE
1	2 to 3 Karma
2	2 to 3 Karma
3	4 Karma
4	5 to 7 Karma
5	8 to 10 Karma
6	13 to 20 Karma

POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 2 TO 3 KARMA

3D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
3	2	Metahuman Traits
4	2	Low-Light Vision
5	2	Thorns
6	3	Animal Pelage (Camo Fur)
7	3	Beak (Standard)
8	3	Claws (Digging)
9	3	Dermal Alterations (Blubber or Dragon Skin, player's choice)
10	3	Marsupial Pouch
11	3	Natural Venom (Injected, Mild)
12	3	Dermal Deposits
13	3	Thermographic Vision
14	3	Underwater Vision
15	3	Greasy Skin
16	3	Thermographic Vision or Underwater Vision (player's choice)
17	3	Vomeronasal Gland
18	3	Keen-Eared

POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 5 TO 7 KARMA

3D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
3	5	Animal Pelage (Quills) or Bone Spikes (player's choice)
4	5	Beak (Raptor)
5	5	Claws (Razor)
6	5	Corrosive Spit
7	5	Natural Venom (Injected, Moderate)
8	5	Dermal Alterations (Bark Skin)
9	5	Functional Tail (Thagomizer)
10	5	Nasty Vibe
11	5	Goring Horns or Larger Tusks (player's choice)
12	5	Proboscis
13	5	Balance Receptor or Functional Tail (Balance)
14	6	Natural Venom (Inhalation, Mild)
15	6	Celerity
16	6	Claws (Retractable) or Functional Tail (Prehensile) or Gills (Full-Function), player's choice
17	7	Magic Sense
18	7	Technosense

POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 4 KARMA

4D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
4	4	Elongated Limbs
5	4	Fangs
6	4	Frog Tongue
7	4	360-Degree sight
8	4	Animal Pelage (Insulating Pelt)
9	4	Bicardiac
10	4	Biosonar
11	4	Broadened Auditory Spectrum (Ultrasound or Infrasound, player's choice)
12	4	Camouflage (Basic Camouflage)
13	4	Climate Adaptation (Arctic or Desert, player's choice)
14	4	Defensive Secretions
15	4	Functional Tail (Paddle)
16	4	Low-Light Vision
17	4	Magnetoception
18	4	Monkey Paws
19	4	Webbed Digits
20	4	Gills (Aqua or Air, player's choice)
21	4	Photometabolism
22	4	Thermal Sensitivity
23	4	Electrosense
24	4	Setae

POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 8 TO 12 KARMA

2D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
2	8	Dermal Alterations (Rhino Hide)
3	8	Natural Venom (Contact, Mild)
4	8	Ogre Stomach
5	8	Natural Venom (Inhalation, Moderate)
6	8	Shiva Arms (2 Extra Arms)
7	8	Camouflage (Dynamic Coloration)
8	10	Arcane Arrester (1)
9	10	Satyr Legs
10	10	Natural Venom (Injection, Serious)
11	10	Natural Venom (Contact, Moderate)
12	12	Glamour

POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 13 TO 20 KARMA

3D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
3	13	Natural Venom (Inhalation, Serious)
4	15	Dermal Alterations (Granite Shell)
5	15	Metagenic (Body) Improvement
6	15	Metagenic (Agility) Improvement
7	15	Metagenic (Reaction) Improvement
8	15	Metagenic (Strength) Improvement
9	15	Metagenic (Willpower) Improvement
10	15	Metagenic (Logic) Improvement
11	15	Metagenic (Intuition) Improvement
12	15	Metagenic (Charisma) Improvement
13	15	Natural Venom (Contact, Serious)
14	15	Natural Venom (Injection, Deadly)
15	16	Shiva Arms (4 Extra Arms)
16	18	Natural Venom (Inhalation, Deadly)
17	20	Arcane Arrester (2)
18	20	Natural Venom (Contact, Deadly)

RANDOM NEGATIVE KARMA VALUE

RP;;	KARMA RANGE
1	3 to 5 Karma
2	3 to 5 Karma
3	3 to 5 Karma
4	3 to 5 Karma
5	6 to 15 Karma
6	6 to 15 Karma

NEGATIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 3 TO 5 KARMA

3D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
3	3	Unusual Hair
4	3	Feathers (player's choice)
5	3	Third Eye
6	3	Slow Healer
7	4	Striking Skin Pigmentation
8	4	Scent Glands
9	4	Mood Hair
10	4	Nocturnal
11	4	Player's Choice
13	5	Scales
14	5	Deformity (Picasso)
15	5	Critter Spook
16	5	Cold-Blooded
17	5	Bioluminescence
18	5	Astral Hazing (Mundane)

NEGATIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES: 3 TO 5 KARMA

3D6 ROLL	KARMA VALUE	QUALITY
3	6	Neoteny
4	6	Insectoid Features
5	6	Cephalopod Skull
6	6	Cyclopean Eye
7	6	Berserker
8	8	Impaired (Body or Strength, player's choice)
9	8	Impaired (Agility)
10	8	Impaired (Reaction)
11	8	Impaired (Willpower or Charisma, player's choice)
12	8	Impaired (Logic)
13	8	Impaired (Intuition)
14	9	Progeria
15	13	Adiposis
16	10	Stubby Arms
17	15	Astral Hazing (Awakened)
18	15	Deformity (Quasimodo)

POSITIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES

Depending upon the class of SURGE picked when choosing to be a changeling, characters get a balance of metagenic Karma to use in selecting these qualities and balancing them with Negative Metagenic Qualities below.

360-DEGREE EYESIGHT

COST: 4 KARMA

This quality provides the character with a 360-degree field of vision. Whether this is due to a repositioning and/or composition of the eyes is up to the player or gamemaster to determine. The ocular structure and system does need to have a natural counterpart such as an insect's compound eyes or chameleon eyes situated on either side of the head. The character gains a +1 dice pool modifier on vision-based Perception Tests and Surprise Tests. This isn't a perfect system, and the metahuman brain is not designed to process 360 degrees of vision. Characters face a -1 dice pool modifier to any tests while in motion, possibly negating other modifiers, and a -1 dice pool modifier when making a Ranged Attack Test at distances greater than 10 meters. These modifiers are cumulative. 360-Degree Vision cannot be augmented and is incompatible with eye replacement. Characters with this quality will normally incur social modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

ANIMAL PELAGE

COST: 3 TO 5 KARMA

A character with this quality develops hair follicles that grow an unusual fur, or pelage. This hair has not only cosmetic functions like Unusual Hair (p. 122) but an environmental benefit as well. Animal Pelage counts as Unusual Hair (p. 122) for rules purposes as well. Some possible options are listed here, but gamemasters and players are encouraged to come up with their own if they want, keeping in mind the natural counterpart requirement.

Quills (5 Karma): These modified hairs are coated with thick keratin plates that resemble porcupine quills, interspersed with bristles, under fur and hair. Quills are 2 to 4 centimeters long, sharp as needles, and detach easily when used in close combat. Quills are used as a defensive mechanism to hold off attackers. If the character is successfully grappled in close combat (see **Subduing**, p. 195, *SR5*), the attacker makes a Damage Resistance Test against a DV of (STR + 1)P, AP +1, using the higher Strength attribute of the grappling pair. Quills can be wielded in melee combat using the Exotic Melee Weapon (Quills) skill, with the following stats: DV (STR + 1)P, Reach —, AP +1. The character's arms or legs must be exposed and mobile to use any of these advantages. Quills is incompatible with other natural or artificial hair or skin modifications.

Insulating Pelt (4 Karma): This is a thick insulating pelt of fur covering the entire body. Pelts insulate the wearer from cold and immersion in water, providing characters with this quality a +2 dice pool modifier for Survival Tests in frigid environments (such as Arctic and Subarctic regions) and +4 Armor against Cold-based attacks. Characters face a -2 dice pool modifier for Survival Tests in extreme heat environments. Clothing and armor can be worn normally over this hair. Insulating Pelt is incompatible with other natural or artificial hair or skin modifications.

Camo Fur (3 Karma): Covered by dark or patterned fur, the character receives a +1 dice pool modifier for Sneaking Tests in any condition with decreased light levels and in environments appropriate to the pattern (stripes in tall grass, spots in a forest or jungle, etc.). Camo Fur is incompatible with other natural or artificial hair or skin modifications.

ARCANE ARRESTER

COST: 10 KARMA PER LEVEL (MAX 2)

When targeted by a spell (including a critter's Innate Spell), the character is harder to affect. This potent

ability makes casting both benevolent and malevolent spells on these characters much more difficult. The character adds (Level x 2) dice to their resistance test against any spell. If the spell is one that is not normally resisted (such as Invisibility), the character still rolls their Arcane Arrester dice pool of either two or four dice and reduces the hits rolled on the Spellcasting Test by any hits they roll. For instance, if a mage casts Invisibility on a character with Arcane Arrester 2 and gets 4 hits on a Spellcasting Test, the target character rolls 4 dice and gets 2 hits, meaning only two of the hits on the Spellcasting Test are used to make the target invisible. Arcane Arrester cannot be combined with Magic Resistance (p. 76, *SR5*). This quality can be taken by characters with a Magic attribute, and it affects spells they cast on themselves.

BALANCE RECEPTOR

COST: 6 KARMA

This statocyst-like balance receptor works in conjunction with mammalian semicircular canals, augmenting balance. The balance receptor provides characters with this quality a +1 dice pool modifier to tests involving balance. This includes Agility-based Tests to maintain balance, Climbing Tests, Jumping Tests, and all Gymnastics Tests. This is incompatible with cyberears and the balance augmenter augmentation.

BEAK

COST: 3 OR 5 KARMA

Instead of a mouth and nose, the middle and lower parts of the character's face are replaced by a beak and nostrils. The beak can vary in size, shape, and function, much like their natural counterparts. The beak is not the only avian quality the character gains. As beaks cannot be used for chewing, characters with beaks swallow each bite whole, and the food is then processed by a gizzard constructed of thick, muscular walls that grind up food. This quality expands the range of substances the character can eat and reduces Lifestyle costs by 10 percent. The extra organ also provides a +1 dice pool modifier on tests to resist ingested toxins (see **Toxins**, p. 408, *SR5*).

Characters with the Beak quality (including Raptor Beak) suffer social stigma and modifiers (see Freaks sidebar, p. 123).

Raptor Beak (5 Karma): Where a standard beak is not designed for combat, this beak is. It can be used with the Unarmed Combat Skill ((STR + 2)P, Reach -1, AP -2).

BICARDIAC

COST: 4 KARMA

Characters with this quality possess a second heart located in the right half of their torso. This second heart augments the normal heart in maintaining the cardiovascular system. Bicardiac characters can perform strenuous exercise for longer periods of time due to increased blood supply and higher pulse rates that would cause tachycardia in normal people. They double the fatigue damage interval for strenuous activities, such as running, sprinting, and operating in hot or cold environments (see **Fatigue Damage**, p. 172, *SR5*). Bicardiac is compatible with synthacardium, though only the primary heart can be augmented.

BIOSONAR

COST: 4 KARMA

Characters with this quality possess all the natural organs for a sophisticated biological echolocation system similar to those of a bat or dolphin. They can emit ultrasonic calls and form a mental image of the surrounding space from the echoes that bounce off their surroundings. Creating an image requires spending a Free Action (Speak) to emit the noise; the action provides an instant picture of the area out to fifty meters that can be used for Attack or vision-based Perception Tests. This system cannot perceive changes that occur between emissions, but it can detected changes through regular Perception Tests. The biological systems for this ability change the shape and size of the character's outer and inner ears and vocal cords. Ear shape changes provide a +1 dice pool modifier to audio-based Perception Tests and result in a +1 DV modifier to all sonic-based attacks made against the character.

BONE SPIKES

COST: 5 KARMA

Razor-sharp bony deposits grow from the character's skeletal structure and poke through the skin. Characters with Bone Spikes cannot wear armor or restrictive clothing because the protruding bone spurs make it too uncomfortable. Armor and clothing can be specially designed for the character and purchased at a fifty percent increase to the base cost. The spikes also make the character more dangerous in melee combat, and unarmed melee damage for this character is (STR + 2)P.

BROADENED AUDITORY SPECTRUM

COST: 4 KARMA (ULTRASOUND OR INFRASOUND)

This quality enables the character to hear outside the range of normal metahuman hearing. They can either hear ultrasonic, high-frequency sound (including ultrasound emitters) or infrasonic, low-frequency sound. The character must choose which kind of frequency they can hear upon selecting the quality, and the quality may be selected twice, once for each frequency. They cannot choose or control any particular frequency within the selected spectrum. This ability allows the character

to make a Perception Test to detect communication or sounds within his chosen frequency band and adds +1 to the limit of Perception Tests involving sound. As this kind of hearing can be considered always on, noises inaudible to others may sometimes distract or deafen the character. This quality results in minor visible changes to the size and structure of the outer ear.

Broadened Auditory Spectrum is incompatible with any earware (p. 453, *SR5*).

CAMOUFLAGE

COST: 4 OR 8 KARMA

This quality provides characters with skin and hair pigmentation that can change to adopt the coloration of a background, much like a chameleon.

Camouflage is incompatible with any other dermal modification, and characters with the Camouflage quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see Freaks sidebar, p. 123).

Basic Camouflage (4 Karma): The character's skin changes color only when exposed for a prolonged time (1 minute) to a background with sharp contrasts, like colorful patterns, and it retains the new color for up to 4 hours total. If the background around it changes, the color fades and the creature's coloration returns to normal within 10 minutes. While the camouflage is in effect, it imposes a -2 penalty to visual Perception tests to see the character, as long as they are standing still and not wearing clothing that would ruin the camouflage effect.

Dynamic Coloration (8 Karma): The character's skin changes color slowly with the background, even as the character moves. This imposes a minus 2 to the visual perception test to see the character while moving and a minus 4 if stationary; the character can not be wearing any clothing that would ruin the camouflage effect.

Even when clothed, any exposed skin will change with the background.

CELERITY

COST: 6 KARMA

This quality results in a strengthening of the musculature involved in running, causing leg muscles to become ropy and more prominent. The character increases her Walking and Running rates to Agility x 3 (Walking) and Agility x 6 (Running) and also adds +1m/turn to her Sprint Increase (see **Movement**, p. 161, *SR5*). This quality cannot be combined with any leg- or muscle-altering system (i.e., cyberlimbs, muscle replacement, muscle toner, muscle augmentation) and is also incompatible with Satyr Legs.

CLAWS

COST: 3, 5, OR 7 KARMA

The character's fingernails and toenails harden and lengthen into claws.

Digging Claws (3 Karma): These claws provide a +2 dice pool modifier to all tests involving digging or moving earth, but they aren't as effective in combat (Unarmed Çombat skill, DV (STR)P, Reach —, AP +1). This quality is incompatible with any cyberweapon or limb replacement cyberware.

Razor Claws (5 Karma): These claws may be used to attack an opponent using the Unarmed Combat skill. Razor claws have a DV of (STR + 1)P, AP -1.

Retractable Claws (7 Karma): Retractable claws have the same effect as Razor Claws, but they can be retracted and hidden. Digging claws cannot be retracted.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

COST: 4 KARMA (CHOOSE DESERT OR ARCTIC CLIMATE)

The character's metabolic processes, skin tissue, and regulation cycles are adapted to extreme heat or cold climates, enabling the character to adjust more easily to hot or cold temperatures. This quality grants a +1 dice pool modifier for Survival Tests (p. 136, *SR5*) and resisting fatigue damage (see p. 172, *SR5*) from their chosen environment and a -1 dice pool modifier from the other. The player must select a climate when choosing this quality. Climate Adaptation is not compatible with dermal plating, any skin modifications, or a suprathyroid gland.

CORROSIVE SPIT

COST: 5 KARMA

The character possesses salivary glands like certain paracritters that possess the Corrosive Spit power. To strike an intended target, the character makes a Ranged Attack Test using the Exotic Ranged Weapon (Corrosive Spit) + Agility [Physical], with a range of (Body) meters. The saliva causes Acid damage (p. 170, *SR5*), with a DV of 6P. As the saliva must be replenished, this type of attack can only be used once every thirty minutes.

DERMAL ALTERATION

COST: 3 TO 15 KARMA

Characters with this quality possess skin that looks and feels quite different from normal skin and has unique properties. Dermal Alteration is incompatible with any other natural or artificial skin modification.

Bark Skin (5 Karma): This skin contains woven cellulose fibers and wooden filaments that make it resemble tree bark in appearance and hardness. Bark Skin confers +2 armor and is cumulative with any worn armor.

Blubber (3 Karma): This skin possesses a thick layer of vascularized fat underneath the surface that acts as an thermal insulator. The character receives a +2 armor bonus when resisting Cold damage, but he also suffers a -2 dice pool modifier to Perception Tests involving cold.

Dragon Skin (3 Karma): This skin forms a scaly hide that makes the character more heat resistant. The char-

acter receives a +2 armor when resisting Fire damage, but she also suffers a -2 dice pool modifier to Perception Tests involving heat.

Granite Shell (15 Karma): This skin contains massive calcite formations that make it appear grayish and hard as rock. Granite Shell provides +4 armor that functions as Hardened Armor (p. 397, *SR5*) but is not fully stackable with other worn armor. For Damage Resistance Tests; though Granite Shell does not stack with worn armor it does still provide 2 automatic hits from the Hardened Armor (p. 397, *SR5*).

Rhino Hide (8 Karma): This skin is hard, thick, and leathery like an elephant's or rhinoceros's. Rhino Hide grants +3 armor and is cumulative with any worn armor.

DERMAL DEPOSITS

COST: 3 KARMA

Tough dermal deposits under or on the skin, similar to a troll, count as a natural +1 armor, which is cumulative with worn armor. If a troll changeling acquires this quality, his dermal deposits become even more widespread and pronounced, making the +1 bonus from this quality cumulative with their +1 armor bonus

DEFENSIVE SECRETION

COST: 4 KARMA

The character's skin cells that allow her to exude a defensive liquid when agitated or endangered, similar to the defensive secretions of frogs. Though not poisonous, these secretions are either acidic, creating a burning sensation upon touch, or cause other adverse skin reactions. As soon as another person touches the bare skin of the agitated character with unprotected skin, that person suffers a -1 dice pool modifier for all tests made within the next 24 hours or until treated with a successful Medicine + Logic [Mental] (2) Test. Defensive Secretion does not work against spirits.

ELECTROCEPTION

COST: 4 OR 7 KARMA

Characters with this quality have developed the capacity to sense electricity and changes to electrical fields in their vicinity. The ability allows the character to use an Observe in Detail Simple Action to make a Perception + Intuition [Mental] Test. Hits on the test are compared to the Electroception Table to determine results. The range of Electroception is (Essence) meters

Electrosense (4 Karma): Similar to animals like fish or platypuses, the character has developed electroreceptor organs to detect electromagnetic fields. While current electronic devices have optical processors, they still require electrical energy in order to function, and that energy generates an electric field.

Technosense (7 Karma): In a still-unknown organic process, the character can sense the higher energies of wireless technology like technomancers. While the character can sense wireless signals, they cannot manipulate them.

Noise modifiers affect this Perception Test.

ELECTROCEPTION TABLE

HITS	SENSE	INFORMATION
1	Electrosense	Presence and direction of the electrical field's source
1	Technosense	Presence and direction of wireless signal(s)
2	Electrosense	Relative size and type of the electrical source (biological or technological)
2	Technosense	Strength of the wireless signals (active wireless or transmitter)
3	Electrosense	Exact position of the field's source or if the biological source has been augmented (cyberware, bioware change the "flavor" of the field)
3	Technosense	Presence of cyberware implants or gear with active wireless
4	Electrosense	Personal orientation and height/depth within 5 meters in relation to the earth's magnetic field; type of biological source (metahuman type, animal size)
4	Technosense	Type of device (RFID tag, commlink, smartlink, drone, identification of technomancer abilities present within observed area
5+	Technosense	Presence of nanites; presence of stealth RFID tags; identification of a technomancer

ELONGATED LIMBS

COST: 4 KARMA

The character's arms and legs are elongated, granting her a greater effective reach. Characters with this trait gain Reach +1. This quality is cumulative with any existing Reach modifier. The character must buy special clothing and armor to accommodate this unusual physique at a ten percent cost increase. If the character tries to use ill-fitting armor, the armor rating is reduced by 10 percent (round up).

FANGS

COST: 4 KARMA

The character's canine teeth are enlarged and sharpened like a carnivore's. The fangs can be used to attack using the Unarmed Combat skill (DV (STR +1)P, Reach -1, AP —).

FROG TONGUE

COST: 4 KARMA

The character possesses a long adhesive tongue, which can be extended in a spring-loaded fashion by a muscular trigger. When triggered, it shoots outward to strike at a target and then retracts. Though not prehensile enough to manipulate a tool, the tongue is strong enough to snatch an object, provided the object's weight is less than the character's unaugmented Strength x 100 grams. Because of the tongue's sticky secretions, the object will stick to the tongue until manually removed. If the character also possesses the Natural Venom quality (p. 117) the tongue can be used to apply the substance with a successful touch-only melee attack (p. 187, *SR5*) using the Exotic Melee Weapon (Frog Tongue) skill.

FUNCTIONAL TAIL

COST: 4 TO 7 KARMA

A tail grows from the base of the character's spine; this may be scaly (like a lizard), hairy (like a monkey), or hairless (like an opossum's tail), and it is fully developed and functional, unlike the Vestigial Tail (p. 123).

The character's clothing must accommodate the tail to gain any of the above effects. Sitting in certain positions for long periods of time will be uncomfortable and cause a -1 dice pool modifier to all actions while the character is sitting on his tail. The Functional Tail quality is incompatible with any other tail modification or quality. Characters with the Functional Tail quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see Freaks sidebar, p. 123).

Balance (6 Karma): Usually between one and two meters long, a tail used for balance is not under the character's conscious control. Instead, it functions instinctively by twitching, swaying, and even wrapping around things at random in order to improve the character's balance. Characters with a balance tail receive a +1 dice pool modifier for all Balance, Climbing, Gymnastics, or Jumping-related tests.

Paddle (4 Karma): This broad and scaly beaver-like tail can be used to steer and paddle when swimming, granting a +2 dice pool modifier for all Swimming Tests.

Prehensile (6 Karma): This tail functions like the Balance tail, except that the character can consciously manipulate it as if it were an extra limb. The tail can pick up items, though it lacks digits and has difficulty with fine manipulation. Apply a -4 dice pool modifier to any attempt at fine manipulation of an object with the tail, such as pressing a button or pulling a trigger. The tail has an effective Strength equal to half the character's unaugmented Strength (round down), but it can hold the character's entire body weight if he chooses to hang from it. Prehensile tails do not provide an extra attack.

Thagomizer (5 Karma): This powerfully muscled prehensile tail ends in an array of dermal spikes and can be used for a melee attack using the Exotic Melee Weapon (Thagomizer) skill, with the following stats: DV (STR + 3) P, Reach 1, AP -1.

GILLS

COST: 4 OR 6 KARMA

Amphibian-like gills allow the character to breathe underwater. These can be located on the side of the neck, on the pectoral region, or beneath the armpits. The character's respiratory and circulatory systems allow her to reflexively alternate between using lungs and gills as necessary. These gills develop in varying levels of functionality representing the difference in Karma cost. For 4 Karma the character has either Air or Aqua Gills, chosen when the quality is taken. These gills aren't perfect, and Fatigue Test durations are halved in either air (for aqua gills) or water (for air gills). For 6 Karma, the gills function equally well, without penalty, in either environment.

GLAMOUR

COST: 12 KARMA

A character with Glamour is paranaturally gifted so that all sapient beings perceive him as moving with unearthly grace. His countenance always seems radiant, and his voice is soul wrenching and laden with emotion. People may describe him as angelic or fairylike, and everyone he speaks to cannot help but feel moved and inspired. Sapient beings always respond with awe, deference, and kindness to the character as long as he does not act hostile. The character adds 2 to his Social limit and has a +1 dice pool modifier to all Social Skill Tests, with the exception of Intimidation. This quality renders the character particularly memorable, and he suffers from the effects of Distinctive Style quality (p. 80, *SR5*).

GORING HORNS

COST: 5 KARMA

A single horn or horns express on the character's head. If the character already had horns, these grow even bigger or more pronounced. The horns can be anything from ram horns to deer-like antlers to devil horns or even jagged crests of bone around the skull. Unlike most metatype horns, the character may use these in combat with the Exotic Melee Weapon (Horns) skill. Goring Horns have the following stats: DV (STR + 2)P, Reach —, AP -1.

GREASY SKIN

COST: 3 KARMA

The character's skin contains sweat glands that produce a greasy lubricant in stressful or exhausting situations, covering the body with an oily film that gives it a moist sheen. While it does not impair the character's normal actions, the lubricant makes the character harder to grapple. Subduing melee attacks against the character face a -2 dice pool modifier as long as more than half the character's body is exposed. Greasy Skin is incompatible with extensive body hair or skin modifications or qualities.

KEEN-EARED

COST: 3 KARMA

Characters with this quality have extraordinarily keen hearing due to overly large ears. A character with this quality gains a +1 dice pool modifier to audio-based Perception Tests.

LARGER TUSKS

COST: 5 KARMA

Larger tusks, bigger variants of normal metahuman tusks, resemble the tusks of elephants, warthogs, and walruses. As with Fangs (p. 115), a character can attack with these tusks using her normal Unarmed Combat skill (DV (STR + 2)P, Reach —, AP —). Larger Tusks are incompatible with mouth implants and modifications (except the Proboscis, p. 117). Characters with the Larger Tusks quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

LOW-LIGHT VISION

COST: 2 OR 4 KARMA

The character possesses eyes that provide natural low-light vision and enable her to see normally in light levels as low as starlight. Low-light vision cannot be combined with eye replacement.

Normal eyes resulting from the character's metagenic background, such as elf or ork eyes, cost 4 Karma. Reflective feline eyes with slit irises cost 2 Karma and affect social interactions (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

MAGIC SENSE

COST: 7 KARMA

The character possesses the ability to detect the use of magic in his vicinity. The ability operates similar to a Detect Magic spell (p. 287, *SR5*), but use Intuition + Willpower [Astral] for the individual's test instead of Spellcasting + Magic [Force]. The range of the ability equals (Magic x 5) meters, with a minimum range of 5 meters (including characters with no Magic Rating).

MAGNETOCEPTION

COST: 4 KARMA

Similar to Electrosense, Magnetoception allows a character to sense changes in nearby magnetic fields. This is accomplished by an elevated level of magnetite in the ethmoid bone of the nose and specialized neural pathways linking to a modified olfactory bulb and olfactory cortex. Characters with this quality can literally sniff out the presence, direction, and intensity of magnetic fields, such as those generated by electronics, power supplies, or magnetic anomaly detectors. The character also has an unerring ability to locate magnetic north, providing a +1 dice pool bonus to Navigation Tests. The character makes a Perception + Intuition [Mental] v Object Resistance Table (p. 293, *SR5*) to detect these emanations within a range of 5 meters.

MARSUPIAL POUCH

COST: 3 KARMA

The character develops a pocket-like pouch on her chest or abdomen, just like the pouch a kangaroo uses to carry its young. This pouch is equivalent to a Smuggling Compartment with a Concealability modifier of -6 (p. 455, *SR5*).

METAGENIC (ATTRIBUTE) IMPROVEMENT

COST: 15 KARMA

A character with Metagenic Improvement possesses a genetic expression that enhances the genes connected to the development of a certain Mental or Physical attribute. In game terms, the minimum and maximum values for one of the character's attributes (as listed in the Metatype Attribute Table, p. 66, *SR5*) are both raised by 1. This quality may only be taken once per attribute, but it is cumulative with the Exceptional Attribute quality (p. 72, *SR5*).

METAHUMAN TRAITS

COST: 2 KARMA

Characters with this quality possess metagenes that express as certain cosmetic metahuman traits (such as elongated ears, dwarfism, gigantism, or ork tusks). This quality grants a human character a +1 dice pool modifier when disguising herself as a member of the metatype she resembles (elf, dwarf, ork, or troll). This quality can only be taken by human characters.

MONKEY PAWS

COST: 4 KARMA

The character possesses monkey- or chameleon-like gripping feet with elongated, prehensile toes that enable him to climb more easily when barefoot. Non-tum-

bling Gymnastics, Climbing, and Movement in Zero Gravity (p. 163, *Run & Gun*) tests gain a +2 dice pool modifier. If the character is not wearing shoes that accommodate this unusual physique, the dice pool modifier is reduced to +1.

NASTY VIBE

COST: 5 KARMA

A character with this quality radiates the ultimate bad vibe. Sapient beings in her presence feel an indefinable air of menace, making them feel ill at ease and oppressed. Some might even describe the feeling as being in the presence of evil (regardless of whether this is true or not), and the superstitious might attribute the character's nature to something demonic. The character gets a +2 dice pool modifier to all Intimidation Tests and any attempt to instill fear in a sapient target.

NATURAL VENOM

COST: 3 TO 20 KARMA

The character's body produces a naturally occurring animal toxin (to which the character herself possesses complete immunity). Possible toxins can be found on the Animal Toxins Table. The toxin can be exhaled (Inhalation Vector, 3 Karma), spat (Contact Vector, 5 Karma), or injected (Injected Vector, 0 Karma, requires Fangs quality, p. 115). The Karma cost of this quality equals the sum of the Vector cost listed above and the costs and the Severity of the toxin chosen, as listed in the Animal Toxins table. For example, a Moderate injected venom costs 5 Karma, while a Serious spat venom costs 15 Karma. Natural Venom is incompatible with Corrosive Spit.

OGRE STOMACH

COST: 8 KARMA

The character's unique stomach, intestinal organs, and unusual gut flora can digest a variety of substances that normal metahumans cannot or have trouble digesting, such as raw meat and cellulose-based plant material, including grass. Lifestyle costs for this character are reduced by twenty percent, and the character receives a +2 dice pool modifier on Toxin Resistance Tests to resist ingested toxins (p. 408, *SR5*).

PHOTOMETABOLISM

COST: 4 KARMA

The character possesses an organ, such as chloroplast skin or grasslike body hair, that supplements his energy needs via photosynthesis. Even when the character's organ is fully exposed to sunlight, this process only creates enough nourishment for the recipient to supplement his diet, not to replace it. Characters with Photometabolism reduce their Lifestyle costs by ten percent. However, since the character's overall physical well-being and energy increase in the sunlight, the character feels uncomfortable at night or in the shade, suffering a –1 dice pool penalty on all Social Tests. Photometabolism is incompatible with the Nocturnal quality (p. 121) and with all skin and hair modifications.

PROBOSCIS

COST: 5 KARMA

The character possesses an prehensile nose or elephantine trunk instead of a typical nose and upper lip. This is even more versatile than the Prehensile Tail (p. 115).

ANIMAL TOXINS TABLE

SEVERITY	KARMA COST	SPEED	POWER	EFFECT	PENETRATION
Mild	3	1 Combat Turn	8	Disorientation; Stun Damage	0
Moderate	5	1 Combat Turn	12	Disorientation; Nausea; Stun Damage	–1
Serious	10	Immediate	10	Disorientation; Paralysis; Physical Damage	–2
Deadly	15	Immediate	12	Nausea; Paralysis; Physical Damage	–2

It can be used for small manipulations or even a blunt punch using the Exotic Melee Weapon (Trunk) skill (DV (STR - 1)P, Reach —, AP +1). Apply a -2 dice pool modifier to any attempt to manipulate an object with the trunk. It has an effective Strength equal to the character's unaugmented Strength. Trunks do not provide an extra attack. Characters with a proboscis suffer modifiers to social interaction (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

SATYR LEGS

COST: 10 KARMA

The character's legs are shaped like a quadruped's hind legs, often with cloven hooves, though other types such as kangaroo or hare legs are possible. The legs also grow more hair, like those of a satyr. A character with Satyr Legs increases her Running rate to (Agility x 6) and also adds +1m/turn to her Sprint increase (see **Movement**, p. 161, *SR5*). The legs also provide a +2 Strength modifier to the damage of any kicking attacks.

Characters with the Satyr Legs quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

SETAE

COST: 4 KARMA

Also known as gecko hands, these hairlike structures on a character's palms allow the character to move along vertical surfaces just like certain reptilian species. Characters with this quality always use assisted climbing rates (p. 134, *SR5*) as long as their hands are exposed.

SHIVA ARMS

COST: 8 KARMA PER PAIR

Certain rare changelings and one metavariant grant a character an additional set of arms that extend from modified shoulder joints. The character may hold and carry double the number of objects than normal. These so-called Shiva arms or Kali arms can be moved independently, but the character will still have one dominant hand unless she has the Ambidextrous quality (p. 71, *SR5*), which can be taken multiple times, each time adding another dominant hand. Characters with Shiva Arms can wield multiple weapons: firearms, melee weapons, or a combination of the two. Weapons wielded in an off-hand suffer the usual penalty; this applies both to firearms and melee weapons (see the Melee Modifiers table, p. 187, *SR5*). The character can use the Multiple Attacks Free Action (p. 164, *SR5*) with weapons in their extra hands, though the character must still split her dice pool between the weapons, and any penalties for using weapons in their off-hands still apply. This quality may be taken twice, for a total of six arms.

Characters with the Shiva Arms quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

THERMAL SENSITIVITY

COST: 4 KARMA

Like a snake, the character possesses infrared-sensitive receptors next to his olfactory organs that allow him to sense radiated heat. This quality allows the character to make a non-visual Perception Test to detect anything that produces heat (bodies, electronics, etc.) within ten meters. Thresholds and modifiers can be adjusted for factors such as warm environments, lower heat outputs (such as friction or decomposition), or heat pollution (too many sources, thermal smoke, etc.). Hits on the test give information on distance, movement, heat output, and location. The sense is not fooled by Invisibility or Silence spells. When using thermal sensitivity in combat, the sense reduces the Visibility and Light/Glare modifiers by one level.

THERMOGRAPHIC VISION

COST: 3 KARMA

A character with this quality has natural thermographic vision, just like dwarfs and trolls.

THORNS

COST: 2 KARMA

Hard, sharp protrusions 1 centimeter long protrude through the character's skin. These points resemble plant thorns. They are, in fact, a modified form of keratin growing naturally from a sub-dermal layer that painfully emerge from beneath the skin. They regrow over a few days if cracked or broken. Thorns make the character mildly more dangerous in unarmed combat. Add +1 to the DV of any Unarmed Combat attack. Unfortunately, the character is in constant discomfort due to the discomfort of the thorns, giving them -1 to all Physical Tests. The character must have clothing that accommodates her unusual physique and may require customization of certain gear (like armor), increasing the cost by 20-100 percent.

UNDERWATER VISION

COST: 3 KARMA

The character develops an additional, specially adapted membrane to the outer eye that enables him to use his normal vision unrestricted in and out of water. This allows the character to use the underwater visibility modifiers (p. 157, *Run & Gun*) as if he were wearing goggles or a mask.

VOMERONASAL ORGAN

COST: 3 KARMA

The character's nose contains additional olfactory organelles that augment her sense of smell, granting a higher sensitivity and contrast by sending neural signals not only to the accessory olfactory bulb but also

to the amygdala and hypothalamus. This enhances a metahuman's innate ability to discern and react to individuals by scent, and also to detect basic emotional responses such as fear, anger, or lust. A character with this quality can also identify individual people and animals by their smell. Add a +2 dice pool modifier to any Perception Tests based on smell and a +1 dice pool modifier to all Social Tests when the character can smell her target. Strong odors and intense background smells (e.g., garbage, spicy foods, etc.) may diminish this ability or even confuse it, and the character may experience extreme discomfort when confronted with overwhelming odors (e.g., large crowds or offensive smells). To reflect distraction or discomfort, impose a -1 dice pool modifier to all tests in these situations (though a respirator can reduce these penalties by filtrating the air). Thanks to the neural connections between vomeronasal organs and the brain's behavioral centers, tailored pheromones provide twice their normal bonus against characters with this quality. If the character also possesses an adrenaline pump (p. 459, *SR5*), other people's smells of fear, anger, and lust may trigger the pump. In these cases, the character should make a Composure (2) Test (p. 152, *SR5*).

WEBBED DIGITS

COST: 4 KARMA

The character has webbed fingers and toes similar to a seal, duck, or frog. This provides a +2 dice pool modifier to all Swimming Tests but inflicts a -1 dice pool modifier to any fine manipulations using the webbed digits.

NEGATIVE METAGENIC QUALITIES

These qualities are the price for those cool advantages of the Positive Metagenic Qualities. While these qualities are intended to be the dark side of SURGE, they can also be taken by characters looking for a little extra flavor from their character's background, such as mysterious mutations or the side effects of gene therapies.

ADIPOSIS

BONUS: 10 KARMA

The character is clinically obese due to metabolic or genetic dysfunction and possesses more than thirty percent body fat. Because of his massive weight and abdominal girth, he is cumbersome and slow to react. Reduce his Movement rates to: Walking (Agility x 1), Running (Agility x 2), Sprinting (+0.5m/hit). Additionally, the character receives a -1 dice pool modifier to all physical activities, including combat. The character also becomes out of breath much faster than a healthy person. Double the DV for Fatigue Damage (p. 172, *SR5*) from strenuous activities, and halve the duration between Resistance Tests.

ASTRAL HAZING

BONUS: 5 KARMA (FOR NON-AWAKENED CHARACTERS), 15 KARMA (FOR AWAKENED CHARACTERS)

A character with this quality has expressed metagenes that somehow catalyze and feed on the character's darker emotions and negative feelings, disturbing the character's aura and any ambient mana in her vicinity. For reasons not yet understood, the character becomes an aspected domain in her own right and taints astral space around her wherever she goes: she is a generator of tainted background count. This astral haze affects all attempts to cast magic on, at, or in the character's vicinity. Whatever the ambient mana conditions are, the character always stands at the heart of a Rating 3 background count (p. 30-32, *Street Grimoire*) that extends a number of meters from her body equal to her Essence; this background count also impairs her own actions if the character is Awakened. If she remains in one place for long, the background count expands by one meter in every direction every four hours (at the gamemaster's discretion, with an upper expansion limit of 4 points of background count).

BERSERKER

BONUS: 6 KARMA

Characters with the Berserker quality have a very little self-control and are prone to falling into a primal rage caused by hormonal or psychological imbalance. Unlike the Berserk adept power (p. 169, *Street Grimoire*), the character has no control over this sudden fury. The gamemaster may choose to trigger the Berserker rage at any point when the character becomes emotionally agitated—though she should call for a Composure (3) Test (p. 152, *SR5*) to see whether the character can suppress the urge. While enraged, the character is subject to frenzied bloodlust and will attack anyone nearby, even friends, without regard for his own safety. The Berserker rage temporarily adds +1 to all of the character's Physical attribute ratings, but lowers his Mental attribute ratings by 1 (to a minimum of 1) for the duration of 1D6 Combat Turns. If the character has an adrenaline pump (p. 459, *SR5*), the berserker rage always triggers the implant.

BIOLUMINESCENCE

BONUS: 5 KARMA

The character produces the pigment luciferin and the enzyme luciferase in her hair and/or skin, creating a green to blue glow via a chemical reaction. Though too weak to observe in normal light, the glow is bright enough to spot the character in partial light or full darkness, reducing visibility modifiers by one level. The

glow is sufficient to enable a character with low-light vision to reduce visibility modifiers around themselves by one level as well.

CEPHALOPOD SKULL

BONUS: 6 KARMA

The character has a kraken-like head consisting of a nacre-like substance instead of bone and a soft epidermis, with tiny tentacles that cover the shoulders and upper thorax. The skull and the upper torso are soft, imposing a -3 dice pool modifier when resisting damage in this region. A Cephalopod Skull inflicts modifiers on social interaction (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

COLD-BLOODED

BONUS: 5 KARMA

The character's blood runs cold, like that of a snake. This means she has a hard time maintaining her own body temperature and keeping everything running smoothly. Whenever the character is exposed to temperatures below thirty degrees Celsius, all tests related to Physical attributes face a -1 dice pool modifier. Below twenty degrees Celsius they face a -3 dice pool modifier. Below ten degrees Celsius they face a -5 dice pool modifier. At zero degrees Celsius the character ceases to function entirely and enters a comatose state until she is sufficiently warmed.

The bodies of characters with this quality have temperatures close to the air temperature, providing a -2 dice pool modifier against detection or attack by anyone perceiving them solely through thermographic vision or thermal sensitivity (p. 118).

CRITTER SPOOK

BONUS: 5 KARMA

Something about the character's presence or smell seems threatening to animals and paranormal critters. Any animals within five meters of the character react with fear and hostility; apply a -2 dice pool modifier to attempts to control, soothe, or pacify them. If drawn into combat, a critter will go out of its way to attack this character first.

CYCLOPEAN EYE

BONUS: 6 KARMA

Instead of two eyes, the character possesses a single huge eye directly above the nose, with the same natural vision abilities of his metatype. Because he lacks binocular vision cues, such as stereopsis and parallax, accurate hand-eye coordination, such as catching a basketball, is difficult. In game terms, characters with a Cyclopean Eye receive a -1 dice pool modifier for all Combat Tests and all technical and physical skill tests that require precision (gamemaster's discretion). Cyclopean characters lack the cerebral lobe development and neural connections to process binocular vision, so they cannot compensate for this negative quality with a cybereye.

Characters with the Cyclopean Eye quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

DEFORMITY

BONUS: 5 OR 15 KARMA

A character with metagenic Deformity has abnormal and asymmetrical facial and body features. Given that many characters with this quality have misplaced sensory organs, such as having both eyes on one side of the face or the nose centered on the forehead, the condition is known on the streets as a Picasso (5 Karma for a severe facial deformity). A significant physical deformity is sometimes called a Quasimodo (15 Karma for a severe physical deformity). Even in the 2070s, characters with this quality who do not hide their abnormalities will suffer social marginalization (double the modifiers offered in the **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123). Depending upon whether the deformity affects sensory or motor functions, the character receives a -2 dice pool modifier to Perception (Picasso) or -2 dice pool modifier to Physical Active Tests (Quasimodo). These deformities are too extensive to be corrected. If the quality is not bought off with Karma, complications arise during surgery that cause the doctors to halt the procedure.

FEATHERS

BONUS: 3 KARMA

The character sprouts feathers that replace her regular body hair or cover other parts of her body. These feathers may be fine and downy (and partially water-resistant, like a duck's) or fluffy and vibrant. Due to the uniqueness and ease of identifying this feature on characters, all Matrix Search Tests and tests to identify or locate the character get a +1 dice pool modifier. Feathers offer no protective value and are incompatible with the Unusual Hair and Scales Metagenic qualities.

Characters with the Feathers quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

IMPAIRED (ATTRIBUTE)

BONUS: 8 KARMA

One of the character's Mental or Physical attributes is Impaired, so it is impossible for her to achieve the natural maximum level of her metatype in that attribute. Permanently reduce one of the character's metatype attribute maximums by 2. For example, a human character would have one attribute with a natural maximum of 4 rather than the usual 6. This quality also decreases the augmented maximum by the appropriate amount. This quality can only be taken once for each attribute. If taken during play, this quality may reduce a character's

current attribute rating in the affected attribute if the maximum is reduced lower than the current rating.

INSECTOID FEATURES

BONUS: 6 KARMA

The character possesses insectoid features such as compound eyes, mandibles, or insect wings Though the modifications are merely cosmetic (the character cannot fly; compound eyes have no effect on the character's vision and are in normal eye sockets), the resemblance to insect spirit flesh forms causes the character to suffer the Hostile (p. 140, *SR5*) social modifier when meeting new people. If drawn into combat, people may attack this character first (to remove the apparent threat). Due to the uniqueness and ease of identifying these features on characters, all Matrix Search Tests and tests to identify or locate the character get a +1 dice pool modifier. Insectoid Features can seriously affect social interactions (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

MOOD HAIR

BONUS: 4 KARMA

Mood hair changes colors according to the character's emotional state; for example, it may turn deep red when the character is agitated. Because the character's emotional state is clearly visible and cannot be hidden, add a +2 dice pool modifier for all Judge Intentions Tests (p. 152, *SR5*) against the character if the person is aware of this fact. Mood Hair is incompatible with any hair modification and the Feathers and Scales qualities.

NEOTENY

BONUS: 6 KARMA

Neotenous characters have halted during development and retain the physical traits of a child or adolescent (up to a thirteen-year-old) even though they are legally adults. Given the absence of certain traits common to adults (height, body hair, facial changes, deeper voice, and so on), they can easily be mistaken for children or teenagers. Gamemasters may modify certain Social Tests depending on how an NPC will interact with the character. People often underestimate children, which may give a neotenous character an advantage. The character's lack of physical development reduces his default Physical Condition Monitor to 6 + (Body/2, rounded up) boxes and may result in social modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

Characters with Neoteny need custom armor and equipment, causing a ten percent increase in lifestyle. They also suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

NOCTURNAL

BONUS: 4 KARMA

A character with this quality has an abnormal circadian rhythm. Instead of a typical diurnal cycle, the character has the opposite—she normally sleeps during the daytime and is active at night, though a crepuscular schedule (twilight activity) is also possible. All Mental attributes are reduced by 1 during daylight hours due to weariness.

PROGERIA

BONUS: 9 KARMA

Progeria syndrome is an extremely rare condition in which some aspects of aging are greatly accelerated. Though life expectancies have increased due to advances in genetic engineering and biotech, the character has only a few more years to live (the exact number is up to the gamemaster), unless he undergoes life-prolonging techniques or gets infected by HMHVV (which turns the character into a vampire, halting the progeria). Though biogenetic treatments have diminished some of the effects during the character's childhood, progeria has halted his physical development in an early stage, making him look like an ancient child (small stature and childlike features coupled with wrinkled skin). Such a character may be mistaken for a child, similar to Neoteny (p. 121). A character suffering from progeria also experiences side effects of the syndrome such as atherosclerosis and cardiovascular problems, resulting in a -2 dice pool modifier to all Physical Tests.

SCALES

BONUS: 5 KARMA

The character has scaly skin, similar to a lizard or snake. The scales may cover her entire body or only certain sections, but they are obvious and visible to onlookers. The scales might grow in certain patterns or appear in unusual colors (bright red, turquoise blue, etc.). The character will also periodically shed his scaly skin as a new layer grows in underneath. Scaly skin offers no protective value. Due to the uniqueness and ease of identifying these features on characters, all Matrix Search Tests and tests to identify or locate the character get a +2 dice pool modifier. This quality is incompatible with bioware skin augmentations and other skin-related qualities.

Characters with the Scales quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123)

SCENT GLANDS

BONUS: 4 KARMA

The character possesses scent glands that produce a foul odor best described as a combination of rotten eggs and skunk spray. While the normal level of smell

is stinky at best and may diminish with extensive use of strong perfumes or patchouli, it becomes highly offensive under stress. The scent is difficult to remove from clothing. Add a +1 dice pool modifier to locate the character by scent (+2 when the character is stressed) and a -1 dice pool modifier to all Social Tests whenever the odor is not masked (-2 when stressed).

SLOW HEALER

BONUS: 3 KARMA

A Slow Healer recuperates from wounds more sluggishly than normal characters do, taking typically longer to heal wounds, fatigue, and pathogen and toxin effects. The character suffers a -2 dice pool modifier to all Healing Tests, including magical healing.

STRIKING SKIN PIGMENTATION

BONUS: 4 KARMA

The character's skin takes on an unusual color, either in its entirety or in patches. For example, a character may acquire brown leopard spots across her neck, shoulders, and arms, or a character's skin may turn entirely orange, blue, or golden. The value of this quality is contingent on the striking skin color being obvious and visible, and affecting a character's chances of being noticed, recognized, or encountering prejudice. Due to the uniqueness and ease of identifying these features on characters, all Matrix Search Tests and tests to identify or locate the character get a +2 dice pool modifier. This metagenic quality is incompatible with bioware skin augmentations.

STUBBY ARMS

BONUS: 10 KARMA

Instead of normal arm length, the character has stubby arms resulting from skeletal dysplasia. The character suffers a -1 penalty on Reach for all Melee and Unarmed combat test. In addition, the reduced length of the arms imposes a -1 dice pool modifier for all non-Combat Tests requiring limberness and dexterity with the arms or hands (at the gamemaster's discretion).

SYMBIOSIS

BONUS: 5 KARMA

If the character sets up residence in a certain location for a sustained period of time (more than a season, though the gamemaster determines the specific time period) he gradually becomes attuned to the place and his surroundings. While this grants the character a preternaturally intuitive understanding of the environment and its inhabitants, the bonding can be fatal when it occurs in polluted or desolate urban environments. In game terms, the character's biorhythm and senses gradually adapt to the environment (Essence x 100 meters in radius) around his permanent residence—the place where he spends most of his time. The character makes a Body +Willpower (3) Test each month; if they succeed, they are attuned to their environment. If they fail, they are unattuned and left to feel incomplete or lost. It may be that the area in which they live is one where they do not want to be attuned and they want to actively resist the attunement. In that case, they get a -1 dice pool modifier on the test.

Once the bond is formed, it can only be broken if the character changes his home to form a new bond. They have to live in the new place for a full month to have a chance to break the old bond, and the bond is not broken until they succeed at the Body + Willpower (3) Test in the new neighborhood.

Symbiosis provides the character with preternatural insight and connection to everything living within his sphere of attunement. This grants him a +1 dice pool modifier on any Skill Test involving the Outdoor Skill Group as well as a modifier to all Social Tests with individuals residing within the area. In addition, the character possesses an intuitive grasp of what's going on around him, and he is emotionally affected by the condition of the land. If a fire breaks out, he instantly becomes alarmed. If all inhabitants in the area coexist peacefully, he is blissful and healthy, providing +1 to any Healing Tests performed while in the neighborhood. On the other hand, environmental and social problems—like drug abuse, gang violence, and pollution—produce a somatic response in the character, leaving him sick and depleted; treat as a persistent Mild Allergy until the situation is rectified.

THIRD EYE

BONUS: 3 KARMA

A third eye appears in the middle of the character's forehead. This eye incurs no vision modifiers, except that the character may still perceive depth with one eye closed. Even when the third eye is closed, an onlooker can detect its presence with a Perception (2) Test. Third Eye is incompatible with Cyclopean Eye (p. 120) and incurs social modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar, p. 123).

UNUSUAL HAIR

BONUS: 3 KARMA

The character's hair changes to an unusual color or texture, or it grows from her body in unusual patterns or areas. For example, a character's hair may be naturally violet, or she may sport a luxurious lion-like mane from her head and down her shoulders and back, or she may be entirely covered in a soft, downy fur like the nocturna elf metavariant or the monkey-like hanuman. Due to the uniqueness and ease of identifying these features on characters, all Matrix Search Tests and tests to identify or locate the character receive a +1 dice pool modifier. Unusual Hair is incompatible with other natural or artificial hair modifications.

VESTIGIAL TAIL

BONUS: 6 KARMA

A normal or stumpy tail grows from the base of the character's spine. This tail may be scaly, like a lizard; hairy, like a dog or cat; or hairless, like a rat. The tail may be wagged slightly with effort, but it has no other function and frequently causes balance issues for the character. Characters have a –1 dice pool modifier to all Physical Tests involving balance or movement such as jumping, climbing, running, etc. The Vestigial Tail quality is incompatible with the Functional Tail (p. 115), cybernetic, or bioware tails.

Characters with the Vestigial Tail quality suffer social stigma and modifiers (see **Freaks** sidebar).

NEW CRITTER POWERS

SHIFT

Type: M **Action:** Complex
Range: Self **Duration:** Special

This power allows the critter to take on the shape of a specific animal or metahuman and later revert to its original form. Any deltaware (or better) implants carry over to the new form; sub-deltaware implants are automatically rejected during the change, causing (total Essence cost of implants x 10, round down)P damage. The character does not recover the Essence from implants lost in this fashion. Purely cosmetic alterations such as piercings and tattoos are lost as well, though this causes no injuries. When in their new shape, the creature gains access to all non-paranormal abilities innate to that race (if any), including Armor, Natural Weapons, and Enhanced Senses. The creature retains all of its paranormal powers in its new form. Once the critter uses the Shift power, it remains in its current form until it decides to shift back. The critter does not suffer a –2 penalty for sustaining this power. This power only affects the creature's physical form, not its clothing or equipment; the process of the change destroys most fabrics.

VANISHING

Type: M **Action:** Free
Range: Self **Duration:** Special

The critter is capable of vanishing without a trace; their material and astral forms entirely go away, without interference from physical or mental barriers. Some critters may use a Complex Action to reappear, but in many cases the Vanishing is triggered by a certain event, such as the critter's death, that makes re-emergence difficult.

FREAKS

Many of the Negative Metagenic Qualities provide serious social issues for characters since they look so strange. In a world of cookie-cutter corporate employees and ever-present surveillance, being different makes you stick out like a pink mohawk at a black trench coat convention. That, and everybody looks at you like you have two heads—which may well be one of the things you have.

Getting down to chrome tacks, what this means is every time you take a quality that mentions this sidebar, you face a –1 dice pool modifier for all Social based tests, and for every three qualities, your Social limit decreases by 1. That's the straight rules mechanic, but what does it mean to a character? Well, the character is going to be treated like an outsider or an eyesore, no matter where they go. Staring will be expected, whispers and pointing will occur, and frequent jeers are par for the course.

Certain aspects of a characters freakish appearance may draw violent attention to them from more than just Humanis schmucks. Many changelings who ended up with insectoid or draconic features have suffered from the bug spirit attention (since the bugs often assume them to be rivals) and attacks from dragon-haters during the dragon civil war, pushing them to go into hiding. Some who hid poorly ended up being killed for their appearance alone.

INTO THE NIGHT

"How do you prefer to do it?"

Red looked up from the cooler of whole blood packs, passing her a B+ as he selected an AB- Magus for himself. "How do you?"

EB paused before sinking a fang into the pouch, smirking at him through purple locks. "The clubs, where you met me. Some sick fuck is always looking for an easy little thing he can force himself on. In my case, they don't just bite off more than they can chew. They get bit back."

Red nodded, holding the pouch in his hands. "I have a contact at Lone Star, he gives me access to death row inmates in Darrington."

She slurped the last of the pack down. "That must cost you a chunk."

"Not as bad as all that."

"At least your conscience is clean, right?" she asked.

"Yeah," he said, "but I always make sure, just in case."

"What do you mean?"

He took a breath. "Well, there was this one time ..."

Buzz. Click. Clatter. The durasteel gate slid open to echo in the long halls. Red followed Sgt. Macnamara past the sealed rows of reinforced doors. Cell after cell of Seattle's worst, waiting to walk to the chair.

"Forty-four, here we are. Gary Humphreys, multiple homicides. House special for you, I guess?"

"Just open the door and give us some privacy."

Macnamara shrugged and slid the keycard into the maglock. "Fifteen minutes."

Red walked into the spartan cell and took in the sole occupant. Humphreys was a short man, middle aged, every indication of being a standard corporate drone. He glanced up at the elf with a mixture of dread and fatigue.

"I've still got a week for my lawyer to find proof I didn't do it. I don't suppose you're here to issue a stay of execution?"

Red advanced on him, Humphreys rising to back against the wall, his sudden fear arousing the elf's hunger. Red pinned him against the wall with a flick of the wrist, telekinetic bonds locking the inmate in place. He leaned close, inhaling and letting the scent of terror extend his canines.

"No..." Humphreys whimpered. "No, no, please..."

"Shhh..." Red placed his hands to each side of Humphreys' head, silently intoning the blasphemous Latin of his tradition. Their eyes rolled back in synchrony. With a twin gasp, Red broke the connection, taking a step back and appraising the inmate again.

"You didn't kill them."

Humphreys slid to the floor, chest heaving from the mind probe. "No ... I loved them ... how could I kill my own family?"

Red sighed. "Well, dinner's off."

"What?"

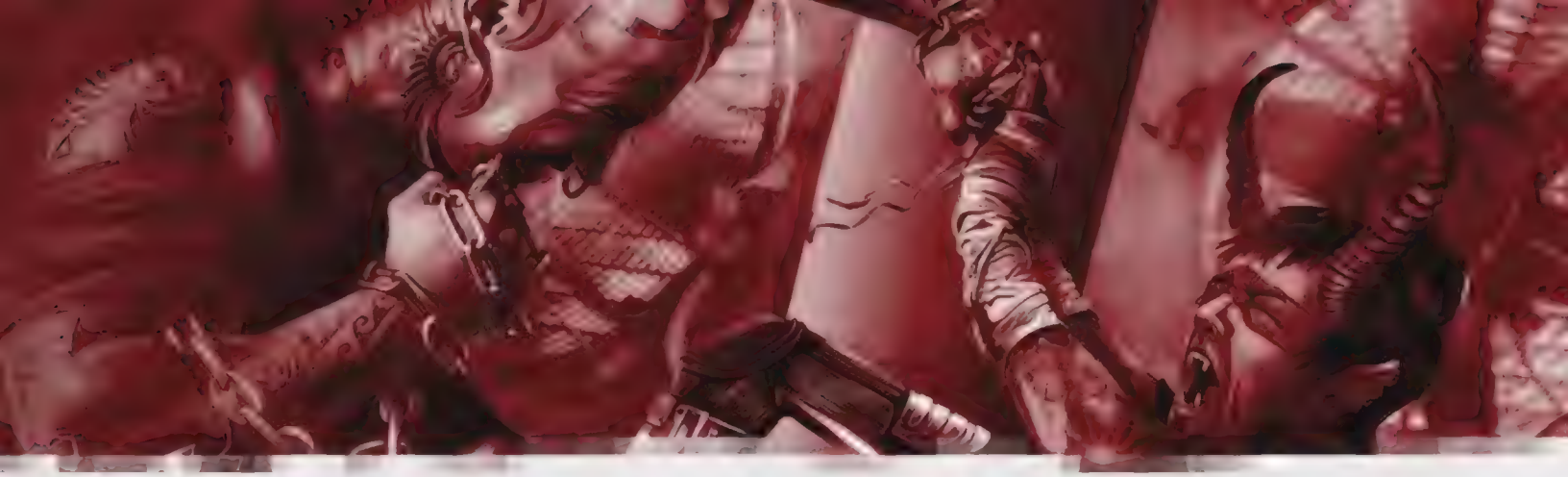
"Now I have to figure how to get you out of here."

"So what happened?"

Red ran a hand through the hair that gave him his name and sighed. "I picked up the case where KE left off. Found the real killer. Found a way to give the Star and Macnamara credit so I could pay down future visits. Humphreys got pardoned and moved to Boston."

"What happened to the real killer?"

Red smiled darkly and opened the blood pack.



- Hannibelle came to me not too long ago and said, "Slamm," (she calls me Slamm. Not everyone gets away with that), "remember how FastJack said we needed new perspectives? I think I've got one for you." Then she dropped an interesting CV into my inbox, and she was right. He's different. So I'm letting Red come in on a probationary basis, even if he is a vampire. Worse than a vampire, though: he's a Blackhawks fan. So it's not just a probationary period, it's ultra-super-probationary! The Blackhawks! I mean, yeah, they've had a decent run lately, but they haven't had the Cup in, what, thirty-six years or so?
- Slamm-0!

- Actually, Slamm-0!, I'm really not. If I were, I'd point out that the Seattle Coyotes have never, in fact, held the Stanley Cup. Even before they left Phoenix.
- Red

- Bull, where'd you put the ban-hammer ... ?
- Slamm-0!

- You hopeless freakin' goofballs.
- Netcat

A NIGHT IN THE LIFE

POSTED BY: RED

When someone finds out what I am, what I can do, and what I must do to survive, the first question they ask is usually, "What's it like?" Which is funny, because that's what I ask every other Infected I meet, and the answer is never, ever the same. Similar condition, different morality, different methods of coping.

If you want to know what a vampire *is*, I suggest reading the works of Thomas McAllister. He's close enough to the condition without having it that he can give you the science, the nature of the beast, without knowing it as intimately as I do.

I'm here to give you the insider look. To tell you what it's like when you're not staring into the abyss, but out from it.

- A little maudlin, isn't he? Is he writing this on vellum by candlelight, his lacy cuffs getting stained by the ink?
- Pistons

- Okay, I lay it on a little thick sometimes; I'm a vampire, a mage, and an elf, so ... guilty as charged. There's something about this condition, though, that makes one wax philosophic at times. I am by no means the only vampire who does this. It's how some of us keep a grip on our humanity.
- Red

You've seen the trids, you've read the books, and you've probably bought a fake set of fangs for a Halloween party at some point in your life. I can tell you, cosmetics aside, the closest thing you'll find to the truth is Martin de Vries' Darrien Cross book series. And I wholeheartedly apologize for how melodramatic it all comes off.

- Considering de Vries' connection to the source material, that's hardly surprising.
- Clockwork

- Yeah, that one caught me by surprise a little bit, actually, but in my defense, I'd been out of the loop for quite a while and wound up going on a Darrien Cross binge-read as part of playing catch-up. I finished *The House of Saint Béla* maybe three hours before someone pointed me to the video of him coming out.
- Red

THE LAST NIGHT

It could happen anywhere. An alleyway, in your car, in your bed. A vampire is highly mobile and doesn't require any invitation to get into your home. They drain out your soul and leave only the barest dregs of yourself inside, and you are held just outside of death by a virus that has seeped into you with every drop they drained away. And for a few days, there is a perfect darkness.

You float, maybe dreaming, but far from aware, as the virus merges with you, sublimating your identity as it rewrites your DNA, takes what it likes and throws out the rest, trying to make you a better killer, a better host. Every strain has a different idea just what that will be. The dreams become nightmares.

And then you wake up. And it gets worse.

THE FIRST NIGHT ...

The only thing you can be aware of is a singular hunger. Your central, yawning desire is to feed, and it pushes against your will and sense of self such that most newborn vampires don't even bother stumbling to a fridge for stuffers only to retch them back out. The senses are sharper, hearing heartbeats and smelling blood. Thermographic vision emphasizes the pulse and heat of living prey, and instinct takes over. Doubt is a distant cry next to the very present need, and you tear into the first poor bastard who crosses your path, whoever they are.

Teeth pierce flesh, blood gushes into your mouth, and it satisfies even as it pushes your senses further. Some part of your blackened aura, maybe what remains of your soul, reaches out to theirs, following the bridge of intimacy created by direct emotional context. In other words, you have terrified them, and you use that association to connect to their soul. The virus starts pulling their aura, piece by irreplaceable piece, into your own, and then the real ecstasy begins for both of you. You feel the vast emptiness filling inside, the sense of health and solidity and normalcy returning. It's something like a hypoglycemic attack taken to a maddening degree, and the satiation is not merely satisfying, but intimate and empowering. Worst of all, it feels intensely right.

The virus has mutated you, made you into a vessel for hunting, killing, and spreading. It has done it with all the viciousness of a rapist and a killer. But it has left you your sense of self. You are living a double life, at odds with a part of yourself that wants very inhuman things even as who you are still remains, albeit in a new paradigm.

- So ... killing them is a mercy, right? Paydays for pink mohawks?
- Whippet

- They said similar things about trolls around Goblinization Day.
- Goat Foot

- They still do about technomancers.
- Netcat

- Soul suckers, blood drinkers, and AI puppets. When you eradicate a tumor, you make the body of metahumanity healthier.
- Clockwork

... AND ALL THE REST TO COME

At the core of everything is how you choose to address your new condition. Plenty of Infected choose death over adaptation. The virus can urge you in subtle ways, the reflexes of addiction and so on, but you maintain your sapience, assuming you aren't driven completely mad or feral by the change. Some strains have been known to reform neural connections in different ways, inspiring a physical predisposition towards paranoia, rage, and even megalomania. Senses are rewired, instincts remade, and you have to find a new equilibrium.

So let's say you've managed to overcome the neural reconnections, the sanity-rending nightmares, and the concept of having to do monstrous deeds to survive (you know, like a shadowrunner might). How are you going to adapt? What are you willing to do to make it through the next night?

- Something every runner has asked at one point or another.
- Pistons

- Speak for yourself.
- Jimmy No

For some, the addiction to feeding is too much to resist. Justifications—or rationalization—set in, featuring philosophical arguments that make great use of the food chain, or toxic shaman-style claims of "culling the herd." These ones tend to be indiscriminate. Others enjoy the hunt, or find some means of moral feeding. When I first changed, I spent my time in the worst parts of Chicago, waiting for some mugger to stick me with a knife for my credstick. As my illusion skills progressed, I could attract rapists and pimps, and get my meal even as I rested easier knowing I was keeping the streets a tiny bit cleaner. You might be amazed how many friends these sort of actions can make you in a neighborhood. You might also enjoy the side benefit of the gear and cash your meals no longer need. Aside from possibly making powerful enemies, it's a pure win scenario.

- Vigilantism 101. Good way to get yourself killed.
- Netcat

- Less of an issue when you regenerate, I imagine.
- Butch

- Your hunters know what you can do. They often come prepared.
- Hannibelle

Of course, not everyone wants to fight. Ghouls may take over necroplexes or find employment for or as

doctors, organleggers, or any other career that offers them their ration of metahuman flesh. Some vampires and other *vrykolakiviridae* strains can get legal donors who get off on the notion of being fed on. I seem to recall a gothic nightclub in Manhattan that was run by a vampire. He had no shortage of volunteer blood donors. Or they find places where people will die, anyway. I've found death-row inmates to be a fairly reliable way to sate the worst of my needs without making anyone innocent suffer. It's not cheap, but the advantages of Infection have their costs.

Which reminds me: you're probably wondering...

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WALK THE NIGHT

The world is, and potentially forever will be, more alive than ever before. Smells become vivid and far more complex. Thermographic vision and astral sight combine to give all things greater depth, but more than that, you see life in every person, in every living thing. Your hearing is sharper. Your instincts are quicker. Response increases as you feel time slow in moments of crisis. Mundane damage is as painful as ever, but the sensation of healing those wounds within seconds grants an entirely new appreciation, and fearlessness, for the experience.

And there is no feeling quite so freeing as that of surrendering the corporeal to become mist. Vision becomes a hazy thing, sounds muffled, gravity a memory, wind the new terrain. I have yet to read a single scientific paper that explains how this phenomena works, and I'd like to know, but in the meantime, it makes breaking in and out of places a snap. Or, at least, it did (more on that later). Feeding is, unfortunately, as emotionally potent an experience for the vampire as it is for the victim. More often than not the infection Awakens the host, granting new supernatural powers. And for the low cost of a parasitic invasion of the remnants of your soul, you can have this experience, living on the knife's edge of power, for eternity.

- Regeneration basically designates any Infected runner as the bullet sponge for the team.
- Kane

- Just remember that magic damage isn't resisted by a healing factor.
- Red

- Healing factor?
- /dev/grrl

- An old comic book term for regeneration.
- Bull

- I'm about seventy years behind my old favorites.
- Red

- How old could you be?
- Turbo Bunny

Of course, you didn't think it was all good news.

The touch of sunlight was once merely painful. Prolonged exposure caused burning, much as you might see in an exceptionally sensitive albino, albeit with much more nerve response.

- That means it hurts a lot more.
- Butch

For most of us, though, sunlight is now causing much quicker, much more grievous damage. Immediate burns appear much like being hit with extreme heat, and cloud cover doesn't do much to stop it. Ultraviolet-A cuts just fine through Seattle skies, unless there is a rainstorm with incredibly dense ash clouds, in which case burns may take a few minutes to appear; the pain is constant regardless.

- UV-A isn't the only culprit in sunlight and its effects on the Infected; it's painful, but only a portion of a much more complex puzzle. Dr. McAllister has a monograph, creatively entitled *Causes of Photosensitivity in the Infected*, which sheds a great deal of light on the subject, no pun intended. It is not, however, for the scientifically faint-of-heart.
- The Smiling Bandit

Exposure to wood produces a violent allergic reaction, meaning just resting your hands on a nice unvarnished mahogany table can result in immediate blistering. And these kinds of reactions don't always regenerate like most traumas will. Applied magical healing or medical treatment is equivalent to any similar wound in a metahuman. Some Infection strains can also have their own unique allergens, such as wolfsbane. Some vampires develop psychosomatic allergies, exhibiting pain and blistering when exposed to holy symbols or garlic, though there is no known scientific cause for it beyond the virus making the host's belief manifest. In an odd way, that offers some hope for many of us. If the virus can be fooled into making us weaker, it can also perhaps be made to adapt in other ways, allowing us to feed less, return to the sun, and otherwise ease the burden placed on us and society.

A unique handicap we vampires have is our lack of buoyancy and our tendency to enter suspended animation when denied oxygen. This has been my personal bane twice, robbing me of much of my life. Perhaps a vampire in a controlled scenario might go peacefully into a long slumber. For me, there was only the agony of drowning, after minutes of clawing for the surface, to no avail.

- How much of your life? Seriously, how old are you?!
- Turbo Bunny

- Slightly older than you'll believe.
- Red

Also of note is the inability of many Infected to consume ordinary food and beverages. You think that's no big deal right now, but wait until you realize just how many social situations depend on sharing a meal. There is so much more time on your hands, and you lose one more connection, one more thing which you used to bond with the people you know. Someone insists you drink with them, and you are puking poisoned blood quicker than you will believe. Only the rarest vampires overcome this handicap, and I honestly wish I knew how. Even then, I'm told they have to throw it all back up within an hour. We are confined to a high-protein liquid diet. I'm told it's all the rage in LA fitness clubs. Ours just happens to have a socially unacceptable source.

Oh, and before you cast any stones, just remember that Leónization treatments, and possibly other gene therapies, are derived from HMHVV genetic structures. What you abhor in me is already in your life. It might already be in *you*.

- Every mega has done at least some research into HMHVV sequences trying to uncover the secrets behind their abilities without their drawbacks. A number of Infection-derived plasmid vehicles are being tested as vectors for quicker recoding.
- The Smiling Bandit

- There is no cheating time.
- Man-of-Many-Names

HUNTERS HUNTED

Being a vampire is always, always a study of duality. We must hunt for what sustains us, but we in turn are hunted. The efforts of terrorist groups like Fear the Dark and the predations of the 162 ghoul gangs hardly build positive publicity for those of us who would prefer integration. The horror of what we must do to survive means many are left with lost loved ones, and nothing inspires a hunter like that. Even the vampire Martin de Vries fights for such vengeance, and I can't blame him. Many metroplexes offer bounties on Infected, and the price paid for a live specimen is worth it for those who won't feel a twinge of guilt at the thought of the torturous experiments that will be performed on them.

- Hmmm...
- Clockwork

- For once, we agree.
- Sticks

- Still sore about Chicago?
- Red

- Which time?
- Sticks

- I don't suppose it would help if I said I was sorry, would it?
- Red

Corporate security has gotten wise to us, as well. Our mist form can't pass through ventilation systems that have UV filters or through doors that are air-tight. Wood particle sprays and high-power UV-A lighting are cheap and efficient. Wards provide another obstacle for us since we're dual-natured, and medical and even thermographic scans can reveal our nature quickly, resulting in a very quick, very vicious escalation of security.

But it's the everyday events that can cause the most inconvenience. Getting around by day becomes a dangerous proposition. Neighbors become aware of peculiarities that inspire them to call the cops, and friends are hard to hold on to when they know you consider them, even subconsciously, as food. Unlike those who had to cope with goblinization, we are potentially as bad as we are feared to be. And we have only the strength of our deeds to compensate against, or confirm, their hate.

GIVING IN

There comes a time when everyone falls to temptation. You lie, you cheat, you take a lady home and never tell your girlfriend or put one between the eyes of a ganger selling to kids. Sooner or later it happens. We all have our own flavors. For the Infected, that flavor is souls.

There is considerable debate about what precisely the Infected derive sustenance from. It might very well be the magical stuff of our souls, or simply the energy that connects soul to body. It's definitely got a correlation with the holistic health of the body and spirit. Whatever it is, to one degree or another, all Infected have this cannibalistic requirement. And there is everything in the world telling us it is right for us, including how wrong it is.

Think about it. How many times has forbidden fruit proven to be the sweetest of all? There are degrees of wrong, even in the worst crimes of all. For a vampire, there is no crime so sweet and natural as drinking free and deep, taking every drop and shred, and then letting the husk rise. As alien as the process may seem, the motivations are familiar to you. You don't want to take that girl home to get her pregnant, do you? 99.99 percent of the time I'd say not. But you *do* want to get it on. All the biochemical triggers that make it feel so good are the ones meant to aid in reproduction. So it is with Infected. Feeding, especially to a death, feels insanely, intensely good.

- For both parties, I should add. It's addictive, and it's no joke. Many survivors of partial drains obsess over the experience, either seeking out another to finish what was started or beginning a new addiction to compensate.
- Butch

- There isn't a lot of call for them, but Bite-Bytes, BTLs of the sensation of being drained, fetch a high price in the right markets, namely certain club scenes and body-bank groupies. Guess some folks wanna have their cake and not get eaten, too.
- 2XL

- Snuff is snuff. Doesn't matter which way the "star" goes down.
- Turbo Bunny

Of course, you don't want the competition for feeding, so many vampires who give in to their hunger usually end up making sure the victim won't get back up, often via decapitation. A close-up shotgun full of double-ought buckshot is usually enough to destroy the brain and eliminate any evidence of feeding. For the many Awakened vampires, spells like Turn to Goo and Incinerate work well, too.

- Most Infected will avoid selling off the pieces to chop shops, since trace amounts of the infection can be spotted and lead to massive hunts. That being said, I've known a few ghouls who are happy to take the scraps off of a vampire's hands. Seems that as much as a vampire might take, there's still enough residual energy left in the body for a ghoul to make a meal of it.
- Butch

For us, the real damage is psychological. Again, there is some question of just what it is we feed on. Taking some doesn't have to be the worst fate, certainly no worse than a nasty drug problem or cheap cyberlimbs. But what happens when we take it all? What happens to us? Do we still have souls? And how will they be judged

for what we've done? It's no small wonder Infected cling to life so tenaciously.

- The rest of us are holding on pretty tight, too, pal.
- Baka Dabora

- The world is sufficiently shrouded in darkness that we are all damned, either by our sins or complacency.
- Man-of-Many-Names

- A number of wealthy Infected try to patronize seers to get a glimpse at their future, much like anyone with money to throw around. What's surprising is how many want to know about the afterlife.
- Arete

Ultimately, every Infected has to wonder if they are who they were, or just the mask the virus uses to feed and propagate. Giving in to instinct, choosing to do what you are compelled to do, takes away doubt, if only for a moment. For some, that's enough. Others justify the math of the situation: If they can avoid using any special abilities, just stay in their corner, only two people need to die a year to keep them going. Some of us kill more than that a month just to stay alive in the Barrens. If some people are going to die anyway, why not use their end to fuel immortality? It's a very slippery slope from there.

IT'S YOU AND US

I've run the shadows for a very long time. I've seen a lot of teams come and go, worked with psychos and saints ... and a few other Infected. And I've fought all the same. Any time my team learns what I am, I have to earn their trust all over again. I'd like to say that's unfair, but it isn't. Even an Infected runner with his head screwed on straight is a risk, but not the way you think.

The average runner knows to be cautious around a samurai with too much chrome. When sammies get too metallic, they become detached from people, forgetting what it was like to be human, how to relate to them. The job starts to get to them, but they don't have any of the normal outlets. This makes them prone to killing sprees, berserker rages, or, in the best circumstances, just a nervous breakdown. It all depends on the individual—and the nature of their 'ware. The samurai becomes a liability, likely to blow the meet, blow the run, and blow the team away.

An Infected runner is, in a way, in a very similar position. Instead of metal, they have the viral mutations to contend with. The different manifestations bring their own unique challenges. It can actually be harder for the Infected, though, because while a cybered-up psychotic usually withdraws from society, the Infected begin to crave it, in a psychopathic way. It's a kind of greed, and blood becomes the coin of the realm. They turn cold and indifferent about metahuman lives, giving in to unnatural instincts. They toy with Mr. Johnson. They drain out security guards on the extraction, and probably turn the team if they can, having come to value their skills. These are the ones you don't want to work with. These are the ones worth hunting down like any other runner who's gone off the reservation.

- The bright side is, you know how they operate, and there's a guaranteed payday when you take them down. If you can't find someone willing to reward you for taking out a psychotic Infected runner, you're in the wrong line of work.
- Sticks

The worst part is that these are the most powerful Infected. The virus often works on a reward system, encouraging behavior it wants in its host (kill, feed, breed) by boosting its power. This is easier because wanton vampires are going to feed more often. The virus, instead of being suppressed or harnessed, is indulged, and free to evolve. A vampire who is in control, one you can trust to watch your back, isn't going to have the raw supernatural power of one who is so enthralled by the virus that it only sees food when it looks at you. These feral ones can manifest any number of powers your running mate can't. I've heard of everything from mental domination to animal shifting, and almost anything else you can recall from legend. Separating out the fact from the myth gets harder all the time. Of course, any vampire can learn these abilities given time, but the quickest path to power means selling what's left of your soul.

In the final analysis, for all the benefits and dangers, an Infected is as much a person as anyone else, subject to the same stresses others might face from SURGE, cybernetics, or any of the hundreds of challenges facing every metahuman. At the end of the night, I like to crash with friends and a good movie or book. I take classes, I go club-hopping, and I eagerly await a Shield Wall reunion tour. Vampires can be heroes as surely as humans can be Humanis. If I can ask anything of you, it's that you take us as individuals, and judge us for who we are and what we do—just as anyone else would wish to be judged.

For my own part, I'll be happy to buy you a drink and answer any question you have. And I promise I won't ask for a sip in return.

- I might take you up on that ...
- Plan 9

- I'm surprised you never considered Infection for yourself.
- Ethernaut

- I did, but it's too limiting. There's far too much for us to see as it is.
- Plan 9

- Seriously, this sounded like a Darrien Cross book.
- /dev/grrl

- Getting a crush, are we?
- Kat o' NineTales

- Didn't I hear that you wear school uniforms on runs?
- Red

- I imagine Kane will have something to say about this ...
- Turbo Bunny

- Eh. Wood pulp bullets are cheap.
- Kane

WALK IN THE SHADOWS

POSTED BY: HANNIBELLE

"What's it like?" Of all the questions I get about being a ghoul, that's the one that comes up most. At least of the ones I care to repeat. I usually don't answer, because it would sound like so much pathetic whining, and most of the people who asked would subsequently try to shoot my Infected ass.

So I'm glad that Red answered the "What's it like to be a vampire?" question. I think over the years I've given you the gist of what's it like to be a ghoul, and since I don't feel like getting shot, I'll skip answering it again. Instead, I'm going to answer the second most common question I get: "How'd this happen to you?" Which is both a simpler and more complex question.

WE CARE A LOT

I was a seventeen-year-old kid, reasonably fresh-faced, a good deal less innocent than my parents believed but a great deal more than I can claim now. I'd traveled a long way from home, most of the way across the CAS to the ghoul colony outside of Amarillo, Texas on a missionary trip with my church. Three days into that little adventure, I was assisting one of the doctors, and one of the ghouls, a little girl about eight or nine years old, scratched me. It was an accident; to this day, I still don't think she did it on purpose, but it didn't matter. She scratched me, the virus got into my bloodstream, and that was all she wrote.

I was Infected.

- I can see this veering into whining territory. Do I get to shoot you in the ass now?
- Kane

- And you a married man! I don't think Kat would approve.
- /dev/grrl

- I can shoot anybody I want, as long as that's all I do. And don't you have homework, Lil Britches? A field assignment? Something? Surely I didn't give you the weekend off.
- Kane

I remember way more of the next couple of weeks than I'd like. There was pain, and fever, and pain, and chills, and pain. The worst part was my hands, believe it or not; that pain was the most excruciating, and I still imagine I feel it as they transformed. Going blind wasn't that bad, all told; becoming dual-natured kind of made up for it, in a weird way. I mean, that's a pain in the ass all its own, don't get me wrong, but a lot of the time, seeing things on the astral plane is really pretty.

I'd worked with the Infected before, and I knew what was coming. The physical trauma was nothing compared to what I knew I was going to have to do. I'd been home for a couple of days; the hunger hadn't really set in yet, but I knew it was on its way. Mom had retreated to her room for the night, all but catatonic at what I'd become, and Dad was out on a business trip. I went into his office, found the revolver he didn't think I knew about, and put it under my chin.

I tried to pull the trigger for a couple of minutes that felt like a year. Then my kid sister, all of twelve years old, walked in. She didn't seem shocked, just ... disappointed. She'd figured something was up, and she must have guessed what I had in mind. She took the gun out of my hand and put it back in the drawer. "You don't want that," she said, "and neither does anyone else. Not even Mom."

"She wouldn't miss me," I said. "I'm not her little girl anymore, I'm a monster. She barely talks to me since I got sick."

She shrugged. "You know how hard it is for her to adjust," she said. "She'll get over it." She closed the drawer. "Or she'll realize that not only are you a better decker than Daddy, but you're also a ghoul, and she'll turn into a real fucking bitch. Either way, she'll stop moping about things."

"Language!" I spat out, mostly out of habit.

She chuckled. "I'm not saying anything you haven't."

It was true, but I was still at least pretending to be a good little Baptist girl then. I'd always had a potty-mouth, but I tried to keep my sister a little classier. Didn't work out in the end, I'm afraid, but back then I tried. "I can't be around her when I start getting really hungry," I told her. "I've already had to sneak out once. It's only going to get worse."

"I know." She sat there for a few minutes, then said, almost in awe, "You could be a *shadowrunner!* You really are at least as good as Daddy ... and it might be easier to get food that way."

She was twelve, closing on thirteen; all she knew about shadowrunners, she learned on the trid. It sounded romantic to her, I'm sure, and as far as she knew it beat a small-caliber round to the brain-stem (I think the jury's still out on that one). But she was also right. In the shadows, I wouldn't have to expose my parents to the sight of their little girl eating another person. In the shadows, my being a ghoul would be a secondary consideration.

I was naïve then. I was just seventeen and grew up sheltered; I came by my naïveté honestly.

I got up then, and made my way to the door. She followed along, and we went to my bedroom. She hugged me and then she helped me pack. I didn't take much; some clothes, the old Allegiance Epsilon deck my father had given me, a couple of certified credsticks I had stashed. And I ran away, and I never went back.

I led a questionable existence, keeping up with my family from Seattle, most of the continent away, for the next couple of years. I didn't really become a monster until my sister died, but that's a whole other story for a whole other time.

- You know, I did an awful lot of research on you when I did that bit in the *Street Legends* compilation, and I didn't find anything this far back. How did you manage to bury all this?
- Sunshine

- Aw, the intrepid journalist comes back empty-handed. What a pity.

  Funny how that works, though, ain't it? I'm really a lot better than you give me credit for.
- Hannibelle

- That's … kinda scary. I give you a lot of credit.
- Sunshine

DANCING IN THE RUINS

The day-to-day truths of being Infected have gotten a lot darker. They started going downhill back in 2073, and then they really took a header in 2074. Between the Mealtime Killer and the 162s and Fear the Dark, we really didn't have what you'd call a good public image. Bounties have been on the rise since the massacre at the Mansion in Dallas in January 2074, and after Martin de Vries came out at the end of that year, they spiked, especially in Texas.

- Want a touch of irony? The bounties in the CAS went up nearly triple after the Mansion and de Vries getting outed … and so have his novel sales. They went belly-up for a couple of weeks after the incident in Houston, but in early 2075, they began climbing again and they haven't slowed down. People want *The Enemy of My Enemy* more now than they did when it was first announced back in 2074.
- Red

- The Joint MTK Task Force got an anonymous tip the day after the Mansion incident. The vampire who killed everyone in that restaurant was named Georgia Milton, a businesswoman out of CalFree. She died in a warehouse in Cleburne, where they'd run her to ground. Place burned to the ground in the process. Lieutenant Bowden and her team have had a lot of success tracking down MTK copycats, but "Bring 'em back alive" has not been their motto.
- Rigger X

Of course, Newton's laws prevail in social arenas, too. With the rise of Fear the Dark, the Ghoul Liberation League has really stepped up their efforts. They're still being drowned out by the terrorists, but they are trying to keep a candle lit in the name of Infected rights. There are sympathizers out there, too, more than you might think, but there are also still bigots and hate and fear. Sympathy alone doesn't make much of an inroad with the hate. I don't know. Maybe this is just how it's going to be from now on.

- There's a small group of sympathizers out there who are actually trying to show their support by becoming Infected themselves. "Sharing the struggle," as they put it. Scares the bejeezus out of me, to think about doing that on purpose.
- /dev/grrl

- That's nuts.
- Sticks

- And it doesn't help any of us. We don't need competition for resources, or someone who can't hack it going feral.
- Hannibelle

Regardless, though, I wish the GLL luck with their efforts, because even if we didn't have terrorists and bad actors in our midst making trouble, we still have the virus, and it's a real bastard sometimes. Remember all the crap I told you about back in *Storm Front*? All that still applies, but now things are getting worse. Or at least weirder.

Let's start close to home. Three months ago, a string of abductions began in Snohomish. Street people, mostly, folks who mostly wouldn't be missed. Except for one of them, a woman whose family had some resources, and her family hired some friends of mine to track her down. Turns out that poor, pitiful grendels, the harmless and docile members of our little genetic club, aren't so damn docile after all. A small pack of them had grown tired of picking off stragglers and began hunting metahuman prey more aggressively. Dexy and his team barely got out of there with their skins.

Further afield, there was a loup-garou running amok in the streets of London around New Year's. As you

might expect, this did not go over well with the local populace. Reports on this particular loup-garou indicated that it was faster and more vicious than most. They finally took it down after considerable effort by a number of law-enforcement units. I almost wrote off the reports of this one's ferocity, but as I was looking into various loup-garou sightings and attacks over the last two or three years, I've seen a notable trend. They're getting meaner, and that's saying a lot.

- A team I know recently wound up in the Paris catacombs and stumbled upon a colony of grendels. Not only did they put up a hell of a fight, they had infants and small children. Either they'd Infected a couple of families wholesale, or they were breeding.
- Sticks

- We know bandersnatches breed, and there are confirmed sightings of fomóraig mating, though there haven't been any confirmed offspring there. Rumors have abounded for years of loup-garou and their pups. Who's to say whether or not Strain II victims are as sterile as we've been led to believe? Might have to look into a study on the subject.
- The Smiling Bandit

- There's an image I didn't need planted in my head.
- Netcat

There's more to report, of course, but I'm gonna cut this one short and get back to work. World's not going to change itself, after all, so I need to get out there and start doing my part.

It's going to be a long, interesting haul.

- That's more like it. Welcome back.
- Kane

GAME INFORMATION

The description of the Infection power in the *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* states that Infected PCs become NPCs and pass to gamemaster control. These optional rules offer a way around that.

This section gives gamemasters and players the rules they need to add the Infected to their campaigns as player characters. This can be a risky proposition, since Infected characters can overpower a campaign if everybody involved isn't careful. However, with proper care taken by both players and GMs, they can add new roleplaying challenges and excitement to your *Shadowrun* game.

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

The Mist Form power opens up potent new options for players and new challenges for gamemasters, but they can be offset by several drawbacks.

- Environmental seals are becoming more common, meaning easy infiltration of doors and windows is less likely.
- Most corporate facilities, and many private concerns, have begun using advanced filtration units in ventilation systems, which limits movement through duct work.
- Worse, the fans in most ventilation systems could draw the Infected into the microbial filter, which is a virtual death sentence.
- Many corp security units have begun mounting high-intensity UV lights at the entrances and exits of their facilities. While not enough to cause real damage to most Infected, they are sufficient to jolt one out of Mist Form (see **Walking in Shadows**, p. 134).

Optional Rule: Under the standard rules, a critter with Mist Form transforms itself, any basic clothing it might be wearing, and any bonded foci it is carrying, active or not. Any augmentations that cost Essence are also taken, as they act as part of the character's body. Any other gear is left behind.

With this optional rule, the Infected with Mist Form can also carry up to its Essence in kilograms of additional gear. To see if a particular piece of gear is transformed, the character should perform an Essence + Willpower Test versus the gear's Object Resistance (p. 295, *SR5*). If the Infected wins, the gear is transformed. Transforming the gear back from mist form doesn't require a test.

If the Infected doesn't manage to transform all the gear he wants, he can always transform again. Each attempt accelerates his Essence Loss (p. 401, *SR5*), however, which can lead to additional feeding, which can lead to Essence Drain addiction (see **Essence Drain Addiction**, p. 134), as well as increased attention from cops and vampire hunters.

CREATING INFECTED CHARACTERS

Creating one of the Infected is just the same as creating any other character. The appropriate quality is selected during character creation when qualities are purchased, and the various benefits and penalties are assigned. The normal limit saying characters cannot have more than 25 Karma worth of Positive Qualities at character creation does not apply to Infected qualities, though

WALKING IN SHADOWS

Allergy (Sunlight) represents heightened sensitivity to, among other things, ultraviolet-A radiation. Ordinary clouds in a sprawl like Seattle do very little to diminish this component of sunlight. Exceedingly high levels of volcanic ash or other pollution might reduce allergy penalties, but it is unlikely that it would ever be thick enough to block the UV-A completely. On days of high pollution density, which would make breathing masks necessary for normal characters, an Infected character can reduce the intensity of their allergy by one level (Severe becomes Moderate, for example).

Note that the sheer power of the sun causes UV-A to bounce off concrete, asphalt, and windows. Simply using an umbrella or walking in the shade doesn't offer sufficient protection. Moving about during the day may require a full hood and mask; this reduces the severity of the allergy two categories (Severe to Mild, for instance). Ultraviolet-blocking windows can help make a car safe for transportation in daytime, and UV-treated clothes can add relief—though not to body parts that aren't covered. No combination of gear or magic can reduce the allergy below Mild.

Artificial UV lighting is also uncomfortable. While not usually enough to cause a full anaphylactic reaction, many security systems incorporate high-intensity ultraviolet lighting as part of their systems if they're looking to protect themselves against the Infected. These lights can cause enough of a reaction to cause discomfort and prevent the use of the Infected character's powers.

ESSENCE DRAIN ADDICTION

Essence Drain (p. 396, *SR5*), the act of draining a metahuman's life energy, is the most devastating and most intimate power available to the Infected. Two auras come together, and one devours the other in a flood of ecstasy.

It is a high unlike any drug, and it has the potential to take over the soul. Unlike a drug, though, Essence Drain can have two victims: the Infected draining the Essence, and the victim giving it up.

For the victim, the hazards should be obvious. Essence is a limited resource, and once it runs out, the victim dies. This can open the victim up to the risk of Infection. It might also make him susceptible to becoming a vampiric pawn, dependent upon the vampire to maintain his Essence, while keeping him in an ecstatic thrall as he's drained again and again.

For the Infected, becoming addicted to Essence Drain leads to seeking out more victims. This in turn leads to more draining, more killing, and more bodies on the ground. This brings increased scrutiny, heightened law-enforcement presence, and a multitude of other woes, not just on the Infected who's gone rogue, but for all the other Infected in the area. Who may not take very kindly to all that increased attention.

ADDICTION TABLE

SUBSTANCE	ADDICTION RATING	ADDICTION THRESHOLD
Essence Drain (Victim)	Draining critter's Magic	2
Essence Drain (Drainer)	Target's Essence + 2	1

the limit on 25 Karma worth of Negative Qualities remains in place. This means that the mutaqua quality cannot be selected unless the character is Awakened.

The virus has mutated since its first appearance, and the last couple of years have caused some of the most pronounced changes to its behavior. The most notable changes have been in Strain I and Strain III Infected, though there have been changes in Strain II as well.

Newly created Infected PC characters are assumed to have been recently Infected, or at very least to share the qualities of the recently Infected. Fledgling Infected do not, in general, begin their new lives with the entire gamut of modified attributes that NPC Infected do. Each Infected quality lists both the Physical and Mental Attributes that can be improved by HMHVV. The newly Infected PC may increase two Physical attributes by one point each, or one Physical attribute by two points. Likewise, they may increase two Mental attributes by one point each, or one Mental Attribute by two points. The attributes they select must come from the Improved Physical Attributes and Improved Mental Attributes lists included with each quality. The character's new minimum and maximum attributes are listed in the Infected Metatype Attribute Table (p. 135).

All Infected characters begin with certain critter Powers and Weaknesses; these are listed in the appropriate quality under Gained Powers and Gained Weaknesses. Most Infected characters don't start with all the powers that are normally associated with their Infected type. Many of the qualities have a list of Optional Powers. These powers can be bought with Karma as the campaign progresses; Infected characters do not start with any of these powers. Only one Optional Power can be purchased every two in-game months. You can only buy Optional Powers that are in the list associated with your character's Infected type. A list of these powers can be found in the Infected Optional Powers table on p. 136.

Becoming Infected does not remove a character's inherent metatype abilities. A dwarf becoming a gnawer does not lose her thermographic vision, for instance.

Infected characters can generally accept augmentations, though of course they need to be aware of their balance of Magic and Essence, as well as Magic loss from any Essence loss. Infected with the Regeneration quality need high-quality augmentations to keep their body from pretty much spitting the augmentation out, meaning they can only accept deltaware (or better) augmentatons.

BECOMING INFECTED DURING PLAY

It is possible that a character may become Infected in the course of playing *Shadowrun*. If the character has any unspent Karma at that point, it needs to be spent paying off the cost of the acquired quality. If the character does not have enough unspent Karma to pay that

amount, they need to spend all Karma they earn on the quality until it is fully paid off.

The radical changes made to Infected individuals affects their bioware. Any bioware they possess drops a point of Rating; if it is Rating 1 or has no Rating, it is lost. Cyberware is not as severely affected, but there is a chance that any sub-deltaware implants may be rejected. For each implant, the character must make a Body + Essence (rounded down) (3) Test. On failure, the character's body attempts to reject the implant, causing inflammation and pain around the implant. This causes one box of Physical damage per day per rejected implant. The character must either have the implant removed or start a course of immuno-suppressant drugs. These drugs cost 100 nuyen a month and provide a -2 dice pool penalty to any Disease Resistance Tests.

Note that any Infected with the Regeneration power must deal with the restrictions listed with that power (see p. 400, *SR5*). More details about how different types of augmentations work with the Infected will be provided in future augmentation-focused rulebooks.

CREATING AN INFECTED CHARACTER STEP BY STEP

Create character as normal, remembering that there will be changes in Essence and Magic and ability to use cyberware and technomancer skills as you go forward.

At Step Four (Qualities) buy the appropriate Infected Quality (making sure you are the correct species). Ensure you purchase enough Negative Qualities so that you have the total Karma amount you need. When you acquire the Infected quality, do the following:

- Note down the changes in minimum and maximum attributes.
- Add two points to selected Physical Attributes (+1 to two or +2 to one)
- Add two points to selected Mental Attributes (+1 to two or +2 to one)
- Make appropriate Essence/Magic changes according to the strain of HMHVV you have.
- Apply Powers and Weaknesses to your character.

Then continue on with Step Five of the character creation process!

INFECTED METATYPE ATTRIBUTE TABLE

METATYPE	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	WIL	LOG	INT	CHA
Bandersnatch	6/12	1/6	2/7	5/12	1/8	1/5	1/8	1/4
Banshee	1/7	2/7	1/6	1/7	1/7	1/6	1/7	3/9
Dzoo-noo-qua	5/12	1/5	1/8	5/12	1/7	1/5	1/7	1/4
Fomóraig	5/13	1/5	1/7	5/13	1/4	1/4	1/6	1/4
Ghoul (Dwarf)	3/12	1/6	1/7	3/11	2/9	1/5	1/7	1/4
Ghoul (Elf)	1/10	2/7	1/8	1/9	1/8	1/5	1/7	1/6
Ghoul (Human)	1/10	1/6	1/8	1/9	1/8	1/5	1/7	1/4
Ghoul (Ork)	4/13	1/6	1/8	3/11	1/8	1/4	1/7	1/3
Ghoul (Sasquatch)	6/15	1/6	1/9	5/13	1/8	1/5	3/9	1/4
Ghoul (Troll)	5/14	1/5	1/8	5/13	1/8	1/4	1/8	1/2
Gnawer	3/9	1/6	1/7	3/10	2/8	1/5	1/8	1/5
Goblin	3/9	1/6	1/7	3/9	2/8	1/4	1/8	1/5
Grendel	4/11	1/6	1/7	3/11	1/7	1/4	1/7	1/4
Harvester	1/8	2/7	1/5	1/9	1/7	1/4	1/8	1/4
Loup-garou	1/7	1/6	1/8	1/10	1/7	1/5	1/8	1/4
Mutaqua	5/12	1/6	1/8	5/13	1/8	1/5	1/7	1/4
Nosferatu	1/7	1/7	1/7	1/7	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8
Vampire	1/7	1/6	1/8	1/7	1/7	1/6	1/7	1/8
Wendigo	4/11	1/6	1/8	3/9	1/7	1/6	1/7	1/7

POSITIVE INFECTED QUALITIES

QUALITY	KARMA	PAGE
Bandersnatch	22	136
Banshee	32	136
Dzoo-noo-qua	43	137
Fomóraig	22	138
Ghoul	29	138
Gnawer	35	138
Goblin	27	138
Grendel	32	139
Harvester	29	139
Loup-garou	30	139
Mutaqua	54 (see desc,)	139
Nosferatu	48 (see desc.)	139
Vampire	27 (see desc.)	140
Wendigo	47 (see desc.)	140

NEGATIVE INFECTED QUALITIES

QUALITY	KARMA	PAGE
Carrier	10	141

INFECTED OPTIONAL POWERS

QUALITY	KARMA
Armor (per point)	6
Compulsion	4
Enhanced Sense (Hearing)	3
Enhanced Sense (Low-Light Vision)	3
Enhanced Sense (Smell)	3
Enhanced Sense (Taste)	3
Enhanced Sense (Thermographic Vision)	3
Enhanced Sense (Visual Acuity)	3
Fear	9
Immunity (Fire)	3
Immunity (Pathogens)	6
Immunity (Toxins)	3
Influence	9
Magical Guard	9
Mist Form	12
Paralyzing Howl	12
Regeneration	12

POSITIVE INFECTED QUALITIES

Note that in the qualities below "+1 to movement rates" applies to the movement multiplier. Thus, a banshee character with an Agility of 3 would go from a walking rate of 6 (Agility x 2) and a running rate of 12 (Agility x 4) to a walking rate of 9 (Agility x 3) and a running rate of 15 (Agility x 5). The bonus also applies to the extra distance covered in a sprint, so characters who were dwarfs and trolls move up to a sprint bonus of +2 meters per hit, while characters who were elves, humans, and orks move up to a sprint rate of +3 meters per hit.

BANDERSNATCH

Cost: 22 Karma

This quality may only be taken by sasquatch characters (p. 99). The character's original coat becomes shabby and irregular as it's replaced by its new adaptive form. A bandersnatch's limbs are somewhat elongated compared to its pre-Infected form, and its canines are also more pronounced.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Adaptive Coloration (p. 143), Natural Weapon (Bite: (STR+1)P, AP -1, -1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claw: (STR+2)P, AP -1)

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), -1 Logic, -1 Charisma

Notes: Like sasquatches, bandersnatches have +1 Reach. They carry HMHVV Strain II.

BANSHEE

Cost: 32 Karma

This quality may only be taken by elf characters. The transformation is relatively subtle; aside from a tenden-

cy toward being gaunt, a banshee is hardly noticeable under most normal conditions.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition, Charisma

Gained Powers: Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: (STR+1)P, AP -1, -1 Reach), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, select one of the Enhanced Senses or Immunities as a free Optional Power.

Optional Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell), Fear, Immunity (Pathogens, Toxins), Mist Form, Paralyzing Howl, Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Silver), Vulnerability (Wood)

Notes: Banshees can consume only blood, and they suffer nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) within an hour when they consume anything else. They carry HMHVV Strain I.

Damage taken due to their Allergy to Sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

DZOO-NOO-QUA

Cost: 43 Karma

This quality may only be taken by troll characters. Infection causes the troll's natural dermal armor to grow into grotesque irregular spikes and nodules. Combined with increased muscle mass and bulk, the dzoo-noo-qua is a feared and terrifying figure.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Armor +1 (cumulative with natural dermal armor), Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1)P, AP -1, -1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claw: DV (STR+2)P, AP -1), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, select either Armor, Enhanced Senses (Hearing), or Immunity (Toxins) as a free Optional Power.

Optional Powers: Armor, Enhanced Senses (Hearing), Immunity (Toxins), Magical Guard (self only; p. 196, *Street Grimoire*), Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Essence Loss

Notes: Like trolls, dzoo-noo-qua have +1 Reach. They carry HMHVV Strain I.

Damage taken due to their Allergy to Sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

FOMÓRAIG

Cost: 22 Karma

This quality may only be taken by troll characters. The effects of the transformation are extensive, though not as grotesque as those of the dzoo-noo-qua or mutaqua. Dermal calcification increases, while limbs enlarge and finger- and toenails become heavy claws. The skin secretes a highly corrosive fluid, and lumpy "chestnuts" of bone form under the skin.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Armor +1 (cumulative with natural dermal armor), Corrosive Secretions, Dual Natured, Magical Guard (self only; p. 196, *Street Grimoire*), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1, –1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV (STR+2)P, AP –1)

Optional Powers: Armor

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Air Pollution, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), –1 Logic

Notes: Like trolls, fomóraig have +1 Reach. They carry HMHVV Strain II.

Cooked meat makes them sick and causes nausea (p. 409, *SR5*).

GHOUL

Cost: 29 Karma

This quality may be taken by characters of any metatype. The ghoul's skin becomes rough and takes on a grayish tone, while body and facial hair falls out. The fingers elongate, and the fingernails become claws. The teeth become sharper and more prominent. Their eyes film over with thick white cataracts as they lose their sight.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Armor +1 (cumulative with natural dermal armor), Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1, –1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1)

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Reduced Senses (Blind), –1 Logic, –1 Charisma

Notes: Ghouls can easily digest only raw meat, and they suffer Nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) within an hour when they consume most other foods, especially cooked foods. Gamemasters may allow a Body + Willpower (3) Test to allow the character to delay the Nausea for ten minutes; after that, the Nausea is unavoidable. They carry HMHVV Strain III.

GNAWER

Cost: 35 Karma

This quality may only be taken by dwarf characters. The Infected character's skin takes on a grayish-white hue and a rough texture. Their jaws become somewhat more prominent, and the teeth, especially the molars, become more pronounced.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Animal Control (Vermin), Armor +1, Dual Natured, Immunity (Toxins), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+2)P, AP—, –1 Reach), Noxious Breath, Paralyzing Touch

Optional Powers: Armor

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Bone)

Notes: Like the dwarfs that they were, gnawers receive +2 dice for pathogen resistance. The bonus dice for toxin resistance are replaced by their toxin immunity. They carry HMHVV Strain II.

GOBLIN

Cost: 27 Karma

This quality may only be taken by dwarf characters. Upon Infection, goblins rapidly purge nearly all of their body fat and hair, becoming skeletal figures. Over time, they develop a sickeningly sweet body odor.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1) P, AP –1, Reach –1), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV (STR+2) P, AP –1), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, choose a free Optional Power (any besides Regeneration).

Optional Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell, Taste), Immunity (Fire, Toxins), Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Iron), –1 Logic, –1 Charisma

Notes: Goblins cannot digest heavily processed foods, and they suffer nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) when they eat them.

Like the dwarfs that they were, goblins receive +2 dice for pathogen and toxin resistance. The bonus dice for toxin resistance are lost when they gain Immunity (Toxins). They carry HMHVV Strain I.

Damage taken due to their Allergy to Sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

GRENDEL

Cost: 32 Karma

This quality may only be taken by ork characters. Their body hair grows more profuse, becoming a matted coat of short, coarse fur. Their limbs elongate, giving them an extended reach. Tusks sharpen into fangs, and the eyes begin to protrude slightly.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Animal Control (Subterranean Critters), Concealment (self only), Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1, –1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1), Paralyzing Touch

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), –1 Logic, –1 Charisma

Notes: Charisma score for purposes of the Animal Control power is the character's Charisma + 3. Grendels have +1 Reach. They carry HMHVV Strain II.

HARVESTER

Cost: 29 Karma

This quality may only be taken by elf characters. The transformation changes them considerably. They become more muscular than normal elves, though they appear very wiry. Their mouths become grinning maws of sharpened teeth, and their fingernails elongate and harden into scythe-like talons

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Armor +2, Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision), Movement (self only), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1, –1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV (STR+3)P, AP –2), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Silver, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), –1 Logic, –1 Charisma

Notes: Harvesters carry HMHVV Strain II.

LOUP-GAROU

Cost: 30 Karma

This quality may only be taken by human characters. The transformation is often a brutal one; many loup-garou are left in a feral state, but this is not universal. Physically, the victim is considerably changed. Ears become elongated, the nostrils flare and are more pronounced, the lips draw back from sharpened teeth. The canines are particularly pronounced, and the fingernails harden into claws.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Armor +2, Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Smell, Thermographic Vision), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+2)P, AP –2, –1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claw: DV (STR+3)P, AP –2), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Aconite a.k.a. Wolf's Bane, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), –1 Logic, –1 Charisma

Notes: The loup-garou's power fluctuates over the course of a lunar month, but this cycle is not, as legend would have it, tied to the phase of the moon. During the 4-day peak of this 28-day cycle, a loup-garou will become savage and go berserk as a Bear shaman (p. 321, *SR5*) that fights as if it had a rating 3 adrenaline pump (p. 459, *SR5*). They carry HMHVV Strain II.

MUTAQUA

Cost: 54 Karma (–10 Karma if character is already Awakened)

This quality may only be taken by troll characters. Even more than it does for a dzoo-noo-qua, Infection causes a mutaqua's natural dermal armor to grow into grotesque spikes and nodules. Increased muscle mass, frightening speed, and deathly-pale skin make the mutaqua utterly terrifying.

Improved Physical Attributes: All

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition

Gained Powers: Armor +1 (cumulative with natural dermal armor), Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1)P, AP –1, –1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claw: DV (STR+2)P, AP –1), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, choose either a single Enhanced Sense, Fear, or Immunity (Toxins) as a free Optional Power.

Optional Powers: Armor, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision), Fear, Immunity (Toxins), Magical Guard (self only; p. 196, *Street Grimoire*), Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Extreme), Allergy (Wood, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Essence Loss, Vulnerability (Fire)

Notes: Like trolls, mutaqua have +1 Reach. They carry HMHVV Strain Ia.

A mutaqua can increase its Essence up to three times its natural maximum. A mutaqua only loses one point of Essence every two months.

All mutaqua Awaken as adepts if they were not Awakened before Infection. If they began as magicians, they become mystic adepts.

Damage taken due to their Allergy to sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

NOSFERATU

Cost: 48 Karma (–10 Karma if character is already Awakened)

This quality may only be taken by human characters. Transformation is extreme; the character loses all of his body and facial hair, and their skin grows taut over their muscles. They typically appear emaciated. Their incisors grow more pronounced and sharper, as do their canine teeth.

Improved Physical Attributes: All

Improved Mental Attributes: All

Gained Powers: Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: (STR+1)P, AP -1, -1 Reach), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, select one of the Enhanced Senses or Immunities listed below as a free Optional Power.

Optional Powers: Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision), Fear, Immunity (Pathogens, Toxins), Influence, Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Extreme), Allergy (Wood, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood), Essence Loss, Induced Dormancy (Lack of Air, (Essence) Minutes)

Notes: A nosferatu can increase its Essence up to three times its natural maximum. A nosferatu only loses one point of Essence every four months. They carry HMHVV Strain Ia.

All nosferatu Awaken as magicians if they were not Awakened before Infection. If they began as adepts, they become mystic adepts.

Nosferatu can consume only blood, and they suffer Nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) within an hour when they consume anything else; if they consume alcohol, the Nausea kicks in within fifteen minutes. Treat as a single bout of Nausea as described in *SR5*. Gamemasters may allow a Body + Willpower (3) Test to allow the character to delay the Nausea for ten minutes; after that, the Nausea is unavoidable.

Nosferatu have less buoyancy than human, and receive a -4 dice pool modifier to all tests made in water when they do not have aid of an adequate flotation device (note that said device will limit their swimming speed to the average of their Agility and Strength - 1, with a minimum rate of 1).

Damage taken due to their Allergy to Sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

VAMPIRE

Cost: 27 Karma (+10 Karma for non-humans)

This quality is generally only taken by human characters, though it can be taken by non-humans at the gamemaster's discretion. The vampire's skin becomes paler, and their canine teeth more pronounced. Otherwise, they appear very much as they did before they were Infected.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: Willpower, Intuition, Charisma

Gained Powers: Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1) P, AP -1, -1 Reach), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, select one of the Enhanced Senses or Immunities listed below as a free Optional Power.

Optional Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Thermographic Vision), Immunity (Pathogens, Toxins), Mist Form, Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Allergy (Wood, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Blood), Essence Loss, Induced Dormancy (Lack of Air, (Essence) Minutes)

Notes: Vampires can consume only blood, and they suffer Nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) within an hour when they consume anything else; if they consume alcohol, the Nausea kicks in within fifteen minutes. Treat as a single bout of Nausea as described in *SR5*. Gamemasters may allow a Body + Willpower (3) Test to allow the character to delay the Nausea for ten minutes; after that, the Nausea is unavoidable. They carry HMHVV Strain I.

Vampires have less buoyancy than human, and receive a -4 dice pool modifier to all tests made in water when they do not have aid of an adequate flotation device (note that said device will limit their swimming speed to the average of their Agility and Strength - 1, with a minimum rate of 1).

Damage taken due to their Allergy to Sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

WENDIGO

Cost: 47 Karma (-10 Karma if character is already Awakened)

This quality may only be taken by ork characters. Wendigos undergo the most dramatic transformation among Strain I Infected. They add over thirty centimeters in height, on average, and their body hair becomes a coat of long white fur. Nails become hardened claws, and the canine teeth become dagger-like fangs.

Improved Physical Attributes: Body, Reaction, Strength

Improved Mental Attributes: All

Gained Powers: Dual Natured, Essence Drain, Immunity (Age), Infection, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV (STR+1) P, AP -1, -1 Reach), Natural Weapon (Claw: DV (STR+2)P, AP -1), +1 initiative die, +1 to all movement rates. Additionally, select one of the Enhanced Senses or Immunities listed below as a free Optional Power.

Optional Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Visual Acuity), Fear, Immunity (Pathogens, Toxins), Influence, Regeneration

Gained Weaknesses: Allergy (Ferrous Metals, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Essence Loss

Notes: All wendigos Awaken as magicians if they

were not Awakened before Infection. If they began as adepts, they become mystic adepts. They carry HMHVV Strain I.

Damage taken due to their Allergy to Sunlight cannot be healed with Regeneration, even after they are no longer being exposed. Normal and magical healing still work.

NEGATIVE INFECTED QUALITIES

CARRIER

Bonus: 10 Karma

This character has survived an attack by a Strain II or Strain III Infected but did not walk away completely unscathed. That virus is now in her body, and she could spread it to another person through unprotected contact with her bodily fluids. The character can take this quality twice, once for Strain II and once for Strain III; this makes them a *lot* of fun at parties. Characters Infected with Strain II can still carry Strain III, and vice-versa. They cannot be infected by the strain of virus they carry.

Exposure to this character's bodily fluids means that those characters must begin the appropriate Disease Resistance Tests (see *Diseases*, p. 142). If the character carries two strains, then he must resist both, but only one will express if the victim becomes Infected. Even if he expresses one strain, he will be a carrier for the other strain he was exposed to.

The character receives a -2 dice pool penalty to all Social Tests against anyone who knows she is HMHVV-positive. They also receive one point of Notoriety. If they choose this quality more than once, the Notoriety is cumulative.

INFECTION, MAGIC, RESONANCE, & ESSENCE

The Infected are, by definition, Awakened and have a Magic Rating, though not all are necessarily magicians or adepts. Most of their powers are magical in nature. Should their Magic Rating ever be reduced to 0, either temporarily or permanently, they lose the use of any of their powers except for Armor, any Enhanced Senses, and Natural Weapons.

All Infected are dual natured and may freely learn the Assensing and Astral Combat skills. Unless they're magically active, however, they cannot learn or use skills linked to the Magic attribute. Neither can they astrally project, bond foci, or initiate. An exception to this is given by the Magical Guard power, which enables the Infected character who has it to learn the Counterspelling skill.

No Infected character can take Magic Resistance, and if a character with Magic Resistance becomes one of the Infected, they lose that quality. They may deduct the Karma cost of that quality from the amount they must pay for the Infected quality.

An Infected character's aura always reveals its Infected nature, though this may be masked by metamagic as normal.

MAGIC AND ESSENCE

All Strain II and Strain III Infected begin play with an Essence of one less than their original Essence and a Magic of 1, unless they were magically active before their Infection. In this case, they begin with a Magic rating one less than their original Magic; the Essence lost to the disease takes the same toll on Magic as it would at any other time. They can increase their Magic attribute with Karma, to a maximum of their Essence + their initiate grade.

The relationship between Essence and Magic is a little trickier for Strain I Infected than it is for others. The Essence Drain power and the Essence Loss weakness mean that an Infected character's Essence will fluctuate over the course of a campaign. As a character's Essence changes, so too will his Magic.

Magic loss does not occur every time these characters lose or spend a point of Essence. Their maximum Magic is equal to their current Essence + Initiate grade. If their current Magic Rating is higher than their current maximum Magic rating, then their current Magic is adjusted down to the current maximum. The points removed in this fashion are not lost, but they are inaccessible. Once each of the character's Essence points are regained, access to these "lost" points of Magic can be regained in one of several ways:

- As maximum Magic is raised, the character can spend (new Rating) Karma to reconnect to a regained Magic point.
- The character can take a geas (p. 142, *Street Grimoire*) for each point of Magic "lost" in this manner. Normal rules for buying off a geas apply.
- Rather than paying Karma to reconnect to the regained Magic, an Infected can simply drain more Essence. For each point of Essence the character drains beyond their normal maximum Essence, they can reconnect a point of their lost Magic. Of course, for each point of Essence they drain beyond their normal maximum Essence, they have to make an Addiction Test (see **Essence Drain Addiction**, p. 134)

Using their Essence Drain power (p. 396, *SR5*), Infected characters can temporarily exceed their maximum Magic rating by spending Essence points to boost their Magic attribute.

If the Infected character were to lose Essence to anything other than Essence Loss or some other being using the Essence Drain power on them, that lost point of Essence is subtracted from their maximum Essence (e.g., a vampire loses a point of Essence to a burnout-level addiction; his maximum Essence is now 11 instead of 12).

INFECTION AND RESONANCE

There are no Infected technomancers. There are a few Infected ex-technomancers, but the nature of HMHVV is magical and thus completely incompatible with Resonance.

When a technomancer is Infected, they lose all connection to the Resonance Realms, and all their abilities as technomancers. Any Active Skills they had that were linked to Resonance become Knowledge Skills.

DISEASES

Diseases in *Shadowrun* are essentially toxins, and use the same basic rules (p. 408, *SR5*), with the main difference being a disease's repeated effects. Where there are differences between diseases and toxins in the rules, they will be shown here. These rules are meant to help simulate Infection with HMHVV during the course of a game, and are somewhat simplified; more detailed disease rules will be included in future *Shadowrun* sourcebooks.

Speed: This represents the incubation period between initial exposure to the pathogen and the first Disease Resistance Test (the same thing as a Toxin Resistance Test, Body + Willpower + the rating of any protective gear/systems). It also represents how long it takes before the effects occur again and another Disease Resistance Test is required.

The number in parentheses shows the minimum number of Disease Resistance Tests the character must make. Even if a prior test reduces the disease's Power to 0, the character is still infected and must attempt to resist the disease again when the Speed interval has passed. This continues until the minimum number of tests have been made.

Penetration: This acts as a modifier on any systems that might be used to boost characters' resistance to the disease, such as pathogenic defense.

Power: This functions essentially the same way for diseases as it does for toxins. However, even if a single Disease Resistance Test reduced the Power to 0, the character must still make at least the minimum number of tests, as described in **Speed** above. The disease is only defeated when the minimum number of tests have been made, *and* the Power of the disease is reduced to 0.

Additionally, the Power of a disease can accumulate. If a Disease Resistance Test doesn't reduce the Power of the disease to 0, the remaining Power is added to the Power of the next Disease Resistance Test until the minimum number of Disease Resistance Tests has been reached. The disease has reached its peak at this point, and the Power will no longer accumulate until subsequent tests finally reduce the Power to 0.

Nature: This attribute describes the disease's type and the root cause of its effects. These include bacterial, fungal, parasitic, retroviral, toxin, and viral. This also tells how the disease might be combated using pharmaceuticals and other biotech.

Effect: There are two kinds of Effects: Ongoing and Final. The former is more common. Ongoing Effects are what the character experiences until the disease is eliminated (such as nausea from the flu). Final Effects are what the character has to deal with if they do not reduce the Power below a certain level within a certain time as listed in the description. Generally the other effects of the disease disappear once the Final effects kick in, but likely the character won't notice, as they'll be suffering plenty.

SAMPLE DISEASES

Following are the game statistics for the three strains of HMHVV. There are, of course, significantly more maladies to deal with in the Sixth World, and statistics for them will be provided in future sourcebooks.

HMHVV STRAIN I

Vector: Infection power (p. 398, *SR5*)
Speed: 1 minute (1)
Penetration: -3
Power: 13
Nature: Retroviral
Effect (Final): Coma, transformation

This strain is responsible for creating banshees, dzoo-noo-qua, goblins, mutaqua, nosferatu, vampires, and wendigos. It's only spread by the Infection power. Once Infected, there is very little chance of escape from the disease. If the Power of the disease is 6 or lower after the one required Disease Resistance Test, we have a good news/bad news situation. The good news is, the character has successfully resisted turning into one of the listed types of Infected beings. The bad news is, the struggle has cost them their life, and the character dies. It's best not to get infected in the first place.

If the Power of the disease is 7 or higher after the one required Disease Resistance Test, the character fails to resist the transformation. She goes into a coma for (30 – Body) hours as she transforms. Upon awakening, she acquires the appropriate Infected quality for her metatype. She begins her new life with an Essence of 1 and a maximum Magic of 1 + initiate grade (see **Infection, Magic, Resonance, and Essence**, p. 141). Her minimum starting Magic, if she was not already Awakened, is 1. If she was a technomancer, she loses all Resonance and technomancer abilities; any Resonance-linked Active Skills she had become Knowledge Skills.

If desired, a character may burn a point of Edge to guarantee that they either pass or fail the Disease Resistance Test.

HMHVV STRAIN II

Vector: Injection
Speed: 1 hour (3)
Penetration: -3
Power: 10
Nature: Retroviral

Effect (Ongoing): Nausea
Effect (Final): Essence loss, transformation

This strain causes the creation of bandersnatches, fomóraig, gnawers, grendels, harvesters, and loup-garou. Typically spread by scratch or bite, the virus can also be spread by unprotected contact of Infected bodily fluids and an open wound. Once Infected, the virus spreads quickly through the victim's body.

To resist the disease, characters must reduce the Power of the disease to 0 by the end of the three required Disease Resistance Tests. If they succeed in this, the can make a full recovery, though they could end up as a carrier of the disease (see Carrier negative quality, p. 141).

Succumbing to the virus costs the character 1 point of Essence. If this reduces his Essence to 0 or below, the character dies. Otherwise, the character's body begins transforming. This metamorphosis takes 15 – Body days, during which the character is in extreme pain; treat as nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) for the duration of the transformation.

Upon the transformation's completion, he acquires the appropriate Infected quality for her metatype. He begins with his pre-Infection Essence – 1, as shown above. If he was already Awakened, he begins with his original Magic – 1, to reflect his Essence loss (see **Infection, Magic, Resonance, and Essence**, p. 141). If he wasn't Awakened, he begins with Magic 1. If he was a technomancer, he loses all Resonance and technomancer abilities; any Resonance-linked Active Skills he had become Knowledge Skills.

If desired, a character may permanently burn a point of Edge to guarantee they don't succumb to HMHVV II. Again, though, they could end up as a carrier of the disease.

Essence lost to HMHVV II infection cannot be recovered by any means.

HMHVV STRAIN III

Vector: Injection
Speed: 12 hours (10)
Penetration: -3
Power: 6
Nature: Retroviral
Effect (Ongoing): Nausea
Effect (Final): Essence loss, transformation

HMHVV III, known as Krieger strain, is responsible for the creation of ghouls. It is most typically spread by scratches or bites from those creatures, or unprotected contact with their bodily fluids.

The incubation period is longer than other forms of HMHVV, and is accompanied by pain and fever as the virus fights for control. The victim must reduce the Power to 0 by the end of the 10 required Disease Resistance Tests to avoid the Final Effects. If the victim succumbs, he loses 1 point of Essence. If this reduces his Essence to 0 or below, the character dies. Otherwise, the metamorphosis into a ghoul usually takes another 10 – Body days, during which the victim is awake and aware. He is also in extreme pain; treat this as nausea (p. 409, *SR5*) for the duration of the transformation.

Upon the transformation's completion, he acquires the Ghoul Infected quality. He begins with his pre-Infection Essence – 1, as shown above. If he was already Awakened, he begins with his original Magic – 1, to reflect his Essence loss (see **Infection, Magic, Resonance, and Essence**, p. 141). If he wasn't Awakened, he begins with Magic 1. If he was a technomancer, he loses all Resonance and technomancer abilities; any Resonance-linked Active Skills he had become Knowledge Skills.

If desired, a character may permanently burn a point of Edge to guarantee they don't succumb to HMHVV III. They could still end up as a carrier of the disease (see Carrier negative quality, p. 141).

Essence lost to HMHVV III infection cannot be recovered by any means.

NEW CRITTER POWERS

ADAPTIVE COLORATION

Type: P **Action:** Simple
Range: Self **Duration:** Sustained

Some critters are hard to spot. Critters with this power are damn near impossible. This power allows a critter to refract light around itself, becoming nearly invisible. If the critter remains immobile, there is a dice pool modifier of -(critter's Magic x 2) for Perception Tests to detect it by sight. If the critter is moving, the dice pool modifier drops to -(critter's Magic). The power also plays merry hell with an onlooker's depth perception; add an additional -2 dice pool modifier to any ranged attacks against the critter.

As might be expected, critters with this power are sneaky as hell. They can roll an Agility + Intuition (2) Test. Net hits beyond the threshold act as a positive dice pool modifier for Infiltration and Sneaking Tests made by the critter.

This power works against normal vision as well as both natural and augmented low-light and thermographic vision. It has no effect against non-visual senses such as sonar, radar, scent tracking, or astral perception. However, some critters may have a version of this power that affects a wider range of senses; this will be noted in the critter's description.

CORROSIVE SECRETIONS

Type: P **Action:** Auto
Range: Self **Duration:** Always

Some critters spit destructive chemicals at their targets. Others just ooze them from their pores. This critter's skin secretes a highly caustic substance that is used primarily as a defensive mechanism. The secretion causes Acid damage (p. 170, *SR5*) with a DV of (Magic x 2) P and an AP of -(critter's Magic). This damage affects anything or anyone that touches, or is touched by, the critter, except for the critter itself; it's immune to its own corrosive secretions.

AS YOU AS YOU CAN BE

A.J. dialed the familiar comm number into the unfamiliar commlink. It was another cheap Meta Link. He didn't have any work currently lined up and so he stuck with the cheapest model he could find to hold his phony credentials. With any luck, though, the call he was making would help end his work drought.

The other side picked up after about five seconds. "Office of Ms. Villiers."

"Good afternoon, Michelle," A.J. said politely. "Is Samantha available?"

There was only the shortest pause while Michelle allowed the voice recognition software on the line to verify the identity of the caller, or in A.J.'s case, declare that he was an Unknown Caller

"I'm sorry, sir. I didn't catch your name?" Michelle said, likely while resetting the software for another crack at him.

"I'm hurt. And you said I had the sweetest accent," A.J. said.

"Abraham Johnston, is that you?"

"The one of many."

"Where's your accent?"

"Today's not a Georgia day."

"How do I know it's you?" Michelle asked. Clearly her second voice recognition attempt hadn't sent her any info yet.

"Well, because I know about the little butterfly and your grandmother's last wish."

"So the accent was a fake?"

"Aren't they all? Vocal affectations carried down through the generations to create a sense of cultural identity where none truly exists."

"That's a touch more philosophical than I'm prepared to be at the moment. Is Ms. Villiers expecting your call?"

"Wouldn't you know if she was?"

"Yes. I'll put you through anyway."

"Thanks, darling."

The line filled with a classical tune A.J. had heard but couldn't quite identify. It went on for a solid fifteen seconds, plenty of time for Michelle to fill in her boss, before the music ceased.

"A.J., I'm so glad you called! I could use a man of your talents," Samantha Villiers' voice oozed with the smile A.J. knew was crossing her lips as she spoke.

At the reception desk, Michelle slipped her personal commlink out of her desk. She wasn't supposed to have it at work, so she discreetly used DNI to type up a message for Denny.

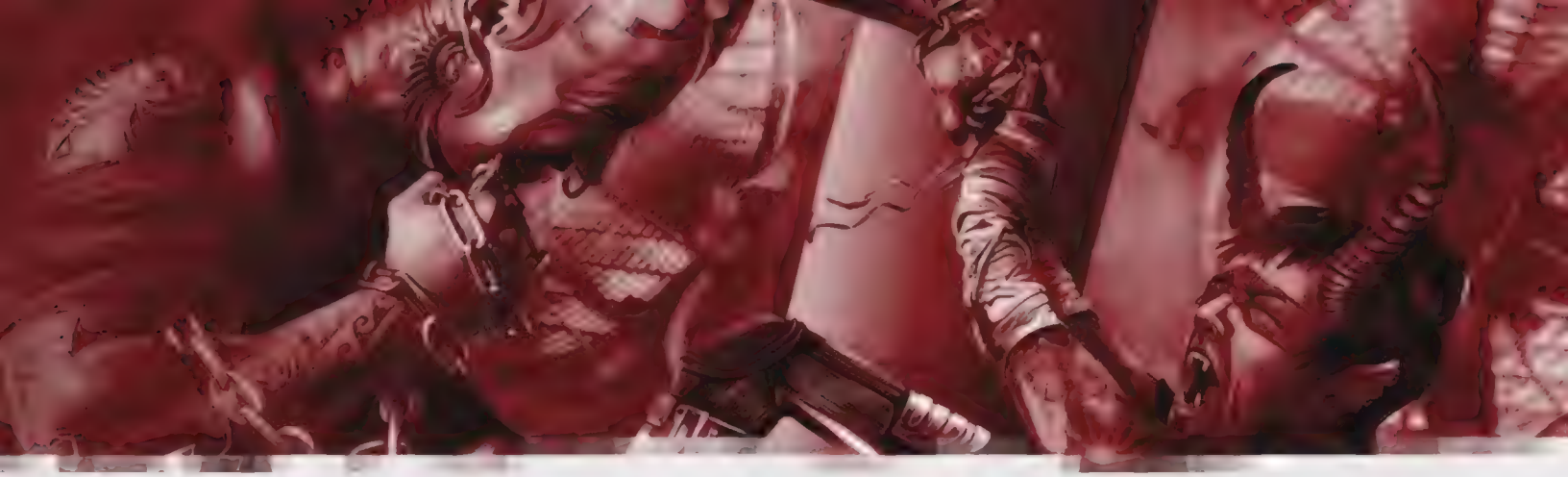
"D, r u still $ 4 info on AJ?"

QUALITIES FOR GOOD OR ILL

Shadowrun is often a tale of flawed souls struggling to survive in the cracked pavement between the corporate towers. But it is just as often the tale of the special, the different, the unique fighting against the oppressive corporate culture that herds the sheeple into their cubicles. With that in mind, we offer a broader array of qualities. The alternate character creation modes in this book can allow for more flexibility in how many qualities you add to your character. Choosing these qualities carefully may provide more Karma for your character, but remember the goal isn't always to max out Karma—you also want to make a character who is deep, well-rounded, and a lot of fun to role-play. Use them wisely and remember everything has a price. Can you see what the piper charges here?

POSITIVE QUALITIES

This is where you'll find those little quirks that might make your character just a hair better than the next guy. Some are straight-up positive, and some come with a trade-off (besides the Karma cost, or course). However, as we've told you before, everything has a price, and we've adjusted these qualities accordingly. These additional qualities can be taken at character creation (p. 62, *SR5*), bought during play with Karma (p. 104, *SR5*), or slapped on by the gamemaster when she thinks it's appropriate (p. 71, *SR5*). Anything you find in this book still has to be cleared with the gamemaster before you can take it for your character.



ADRENALINE SURGE

COST: 12 KARMA

Hit first, hit last, that's your style. Adrenaline Surge allows a character to act first in the first Initiative Pass of a new combat even if they don't have the highest Initiative Score. If other characters involved in the combat have the Adrenaline Surge quality or use their Edge to Seize the Initiative so that they may act first in the same Initiative Pass, characters act in order of their Initiative Scores. This quality does not allow a Surprised character to act first in an ambush, but it can allow a character who is not surprised to strike first.

ANIMAL EMPATHY

COST: 3 KARMA

Characters with this quality have a natural knack for working with animals. The character gets a +2 dice pool modifier for all tests involving the influence or control of an animal (including riding), including Awakened species.

BLACK MARKET PIPELINE

COST: 10 KARMA

During character creation, the player chooses one existing individual contact and a single category of merchandise (e.g., vehicles, weapons, electronics, armor, etc.). The selected contact can always buy or sell goods in that category through the black market with better-than-normal rates for the character. Purchases through this contact get a ten percent price reduction and a +2 dice pool modifier for the Availability Test. When looking to sell goods through the contact, the character gets (7 percent x Loyalty) of the item's original value instead of the standard 5 percent. The contact has to be appropriate to the category chosen, though creativity can be king here.

BORN RICH

COST: 5 KARMA

Richie Rich has fallen into the shadows. The character came from an affluent background (e.g., high-level corporate kid, old-money family, Mafia princess, lottery winner), but is not necessarily still wealthy or doesn't have access to this additional wealth. During character creation, characters can normally gain extra resources at a rate of 2,000 nuyen per Karma point, up to 10 Karma maximum (p. 94, SR5). With this quality, available only during character creation, characters may exceed the usual 10 Karma limit and instead trade up to 40 Karma total at the same exchange rate of 2,000 nuyen per Karma point, for up to 80,000 nuyen of additional funds.

CITY SLICKER

COST: 7 KARMA

A character with this quality has the asphalt and concrete of the sprawl in his blood. They would choose the noise and chaos of the city over the suburbs or rural areas any day of the week. They have an instinct for navigating urban environments. This quality provides a +1 dice pool modifier for all skills in the Outdoors skill group when in an urban environment. The downside is the character suffers a -1 dice pool modifier to Perception and Survival Tests when in any non-urban environment.

COLLEGE EDUCATION

COST: 4 KARMA

The halls of academe are well known to your character. Thanks to time spent actually studying while at college instead of partying, the character can buy Academic Knowledge skills at half price (rounded up) during character creation. After character creation, Academic Knowledge skill ranks of 3 or higher receive a 1 Karma cost reduction for each rank.

COMMON SENSE

COST: 3 KARMA

"Common sense is not so common" as they say. It's nothing supernatural, just a keen sense of knowing when something is just a bad idea. Any time a character with this quality is about to do something the gamemaster deems foolish, the gamemaster must act as their proverbial inner voice of reason and issue a little warning. The gamemaster can only give a number of warnings per session equal to or less than the character's Edge rating. After that, they're on their own.

DAREDEVIL

COST: 6 KARMA

Better to be lucky than good, when you're living on the edge. A character with this quality is particularly lucky when it comes to doing the outrageous. Whenever the character performs an exceptionally daring action (gamemaster's discretion), she gets two points of Edge back instead of one.

DIGITAL DOPPELGANGER

COST: 7 KARMA

The Matrix is a big place, and with a world so connected and so tied to identity, there are bound to be some crossed signals somewhere. The character's digital identity, including their spending habits, licenses, travel records, and data trail have all been cross-linked with someone else's identity. Anyone doing research on him has a hard time locating any information and faces a +2 threshold for Matrix Searches for tracking the character on this ID. This quality must be connected to a specific SIN, either a real SIN (with the character having the negative quality SINner) or a fake SIN (with at least a Rating of 4).

DISGRACED

COST: 2 KARMA

The character used to be a figure of authority, feared in the streets and publicly lauded as a hero until his reputation got tarnished (justly or unjustly), and he was cast out of his community. Such was the character's fearsome reputation that criminals (gangers, organized crime members, and so on, as determined by the gamemaster) still treat him warily. The character receives a +2 dice pool modifier when attempting to intimidate such individuals. However, any upright citizen will treat the character with the disdain reserved for disgraced heroes, being treated as Prejudiced in any Etiquette Test.

ERASED

COST: 8 KARMA

There are characters who lack a SIN because they never had one, and then there are those who had a SIN but had it actively and thoroughly erased, to the point where legwork can only be done via word-of-mouth contacts, and Matrix searches turn up nothing. Also, the quality prevents Public Awareness for the character from ever going above 1.

This is a double-edged sword. The character can never maintain a Lifestyle higher than Middle, and can never used a fake SIN or any attached licenses for more than three months. Living under the radar is expensive. If a character chooses to have a High Lifestyle for a month, she'll need to bail on it and lay low for a bit with a Low or lower Lifestyle for at least a month. If they fail to do so, the systems in place start to slip, making the character locatable via the Matrix and possibly building a Public Awareness—which means that whatever they were hiding from might have a chance to find them.

FAME

COST: 4 TO 16 KARMA

Now if you can just get fortune and money you'll have the trifecta. The problem is you've got the element that is not particularly cherished in the shadows. Whether you're a former trid star, a local politician, a retired or injured sports star, or the latest up-and-coming rocker, your face is well known. It may be just the local community, a single nation or corp, or possibly the world that knows your ugly mug. No matter who they are or how many folks know your profile, being so recognizable has its pros and cons.

First, on the pro side, Fame offers benefits within certain social circles and additional income if the character also chooses the Day Job quality.

That may sound nice, but being well known is not a great way to get work in the shadows, and therefore causes problems on the darker side of life. Characters with this quality are more likely to be recognized by passers-by or others who see them during a run, which can be a problem. And remember that Fame often involves strings; one of the biggest is having a SIN. Characters who choose this quality must have the SINner quality or a Rating 3 fake SIN.

Local Fame (4 Karma): City politics, hometown sports teams, and local news stations are some of the most common sources of local fame. Select a single sprawl at character creation to be the base of the character's fame. In the public eye of that sprawl, the character gains a 1-point increase to their Social Limit and a +1 dice pool modifier on all Social Skill tests to positively influence someone who knows of their fame.

The downside is that anyone from the chosen sprawl can identify famous characters with an Intuition + Logic (2) Test, so characters need to be careful about who sees them when they are on the job. The character's Public Awareness is increased by 2.

If the character has the Day Job quality, they multiply their income by 2.

National Fame (8 Karma): National politics, championship sports teams, and the entertainment industry supply the bulk of nationally famous folks. At character creation, select a nation to be famous within and a sprawl of origin within that nation (it needs to be a place related to the character's story and the languages they speak—characters need at least four ranks in the native language of the country in which they are famous). In the selected sprawl, characters gain a 1-point increase to their Social Limit and a +2 dice pool modifier on all Social Skill tests to positively influence someone who knows of their fame. In the chosen nation, the character has a 2-point Social Limit increase and a +1 dice pool modifier as above.

Anyone from the character's home sprawl can identify the character with an Intuition + Logic (1) Test; people from the nation need to make an Intuition + Logic (2) Test. The character's Public Awareness is increased by 3.

If the character has the Day Job quality, they multiply their income by 4 and also increase their required workload by 10 percent.

Megacorporate Fame (12 Karma): Megacorporate sports teams, the international entertainment industry, and megacorporate politics bring corporate citizens into the spotlight. At character creation, choose a home megacorporation, home sprawl, and home nation where the character's fame originated and grew. In the character's megacorporation, they gain a 2-point Social Limit bonus and a +2 dice pool modifier on all Social Skills tests to positively influence someone who knows of their fame. In the nation and sprawl they came from, the Social Limit increase is 1 and the dice pool modifier is +1.

Citizens of their megacorporation and their home sprawl need only succeed at an Intuition + Logic (1) test to identify the character. Citizens of other megacorporations and their home nation can identify them with an Intuition + Logic (2) Test. The character's Public Awareness is increased by 5.

If the character has the Day Job quality, they multiply their income by 6 and also require a 10 percent increase in workload.

Global Fame (16 Karma): This kind of fame is not easy to avoid. International blockbuster simstars, multi-platinum-selling music artists, megacorporate executives, and international political figures fit this kind of bill. Characters with this level of fame gain a 3-point increase to their Social Limit and a +3 dice pool modifier to all Social Skills tests to positively influence anyone who knows their identity. Identifying the character requires an Intuition + Logic (2) Test or any rank in an appropriate Knowledge Skill.

If the character has the Day Job quality, they multiply their income by 10 and also require a 25 percent increase in workload. The character's Public Awareness is increased by 8.

Characters can create their own runner persona to try and hide their true identity, but it will involve a disguise or mask of some sort. Identifying the star becomes an Opposed Test with the initial Disguise + Intuition [Mental] Test, setting the threshold to identify the character with a Perception + Intuition [Mental] Test.

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

COST: 8 KARMA

"So sorry, Damian, I can't head out on the new Ares prototype ship with you this weekend, I have a run," is something a character with this quality might actually say. This quality gives the character an additional pool of Free Karma for purchasing contacts, with a few stipulations. First, the character gets an additional Charisma x 4 in Karma to purchase contacts. Second, none of these contacts can have a Connection Rating less than 8. Third, any leftover Karma that the character cannot spend is lost. These contacts can't be called at every turn; see the **Who You Know** chapter for information on what happens if the favors of contacts are abused. (p. 172).

HAWK EYE

COST: 3 KARMA

Characters with the Hawk Eye quality have exceptionally keen natural vision. They can identify a face a block away without binoculars or spot a spent casing in a shadowy crack at five meters. Characters gain a +1 dice pool modifier to their Perception Tests and shift all Range Environmental modifiers up one category (e.g., Medium becomes Short). The quality is part of characters' natural eyes and is not compatible with electronic vision enhancements and/or cyber- or bioware augmentations or replacements.

INSPIRED

COST: 4 KARMA

Slapping paint on a canvas or words on a page is easy and requires only a medium and a mouth to tout one's own amazing talents and insights. But to make something worthwhile, something that deserves to be called art, pieces that speak for themselves and stand the test of time, requires true talent. An Inspired character is touched by a muse (figuratively we hope, though gamemasters can see *Street Grimoire* for the literal) and is considered an artistic genius by his peers for his remarkable raw talent. The quality grants the character an additional Street Cred of 2 (p. 372, *SR5*) among fellow artists familiar with his reputation. Inspired characters also gain a +1 dice pool modifier for all Artisan skills or Performance skills they possess; the player must choose which category the quality applies to when it is chosen, and the quality can only be selected once.

JACK OF ALL TRADES, MASTER OF NONE

COST: 2 KARMA

The character has an incredible aptitude for learning new skills. Unfortunately, the character quickly gets bored and gets turned off when things start getting a little hard. Karma costs are reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1) for learning skills up to Rating 5. Beyond Rating 5, however, it costs 2 additional points of Karma for each point of skill. This quality does not apply during character creation.

LIGHTNING REFLEXES

COST: 20 KARMA

Some people are just born fast. This quality provides an unaugmented character the ability to react with astonishing speed. The character gains +1 to their Initiative rating and a bonus initiative die. This quality is not cumulative with any other Initiative enhancement, be it technological, chemical, or magical. They also receive a +1 dice pool modifier for all Defense Tests.

LINGUIST

COST: 4 KARMA

Nothing impresses an out-of-town Johnson more than negotiating in their native tongue. And knowing when they're telling their goon squad to kill you is pretty useful too. This quality represents a natural gift for learning and understanding languages. Characters with this quality halve the learning time for a language, and the quality also provides a +1 dice pool modifier to all Language skill tests the character makes. If this quality is purchased at character creation, the player purchases Language skill points at a 2-for-1 rate. After character creation, language skill ranks of 3 or higher receive a 1 Karma cost reduction for each rank.

MADE MAN

COST: 5 KARMA

As a minor member of an organized crime syndicate, the character can occasionally call on its resources. At the time of purchase, select a crime syndicate as a free Group Contact (see **Group or Organization Contact Options**, p. 176). As the character is an actual member of the syndicate, Loyalty is increased to 3 instead of starting at 1. This status also allows him to use the syndicate as a reliable fence for stolen goods (they get thirty percent of the items' value) or as a source for stolen and restricted goods (ten percent price reduction and a +1 dice pool modifier for the Availability Test). Everything comes with a price, though. The character is expected to participate in syndicate work, taking at least twenty hours of his time every week in a standard campaign, and costing the character one out of every four weeks in Missions play.

NIGHT VISION

COST: 2 KARMA

The name says it all. This quality provides characters with the advantages of low-light vision (see **Environmental Compensation Table**, p. 175, *SR5*). There is a downside. Thanks to the extremely light-sensitive nature of the eye, the character suffers severely from the glare of the sun (Blinding Glare on a clear day, Moderate Glare on an overcast day, etc.) but can mitigate this with sunglasses per the Environmental Compensation Table. The quality is not compatible with cyber- or bioware augmentation or replacement (meaning if you get any such replacement, this quality goes away, and the character receives no Karma in return).

OUTDOORSMAN

COST: 3 KARMA

A character with this quality is often described as woodsy. They are far more comfortable in wilderness and rural environments than in the urban blight of the modern city. They are naturals at tracking and hunting, with a sense of direction even a compass could rely on. This quality provides a +2 dice pool modifier for all skills in the Outdoors skill group when in a rural or wild environment. The downside is the character suffers a -1 dice pool modifier to Perception and Survival Tests when in an urban environment.

OVERCLOCKER

COST: 5 KARMA

The character is able to coax more juice out of his gear. The character may add 1 point of Rating to one of his cyberdeck's ASDF attributes. This point can be reallocated as desired any time the cyberdeck is reconfigured.

PERCEPTIVE

COST: 5 TO 10 KARMA

The devil is in the details, and you see those horns regularly. This quality is available at two levels. For 5 Karma, characters receive a +1 dice pool modifier on all Perception Tests, including Astral and Matrix Perception. For 10 Karma, the modifier increases to +2.

PERFECT TIME

COST: 5 KARMA

Who needs a watch when you're around? The character with this quality always knows the time, down to the minute, and has a perfect sense of rhythm and timing. This perfect sense can only be obstructed through prolonged isolation, unconsciousness, or distortion of temporal perception through drugs, chips, or an extended period in the Matrix. This quality provides two game benefits: a +1 dice pool modifier for Performance Tests involving timing and rhythm, along with an additional Free Action during every Action Phase.

POOR LINK

COST: 8 KARMA

There's a haze to the character's aura that makes connecting over a distance difficult. All ritual sorcery, including friendly efforts, directed at the character receives a -2 dice pool modifier for the Ritual Spellcasting Test during Step 7: Seal the Ritual. The character also has a +2 dice pool modifier for any Resistance

Tests she might have to make against the ritual, including against friendly rituals.

PRIVILEGED FAMILY NAME

COST: 7 KARMA

With this quality the character's family is exceptionally well-connected, and his real name carries significant clout in his home sprawl (selected at character creation). Though probably known as a rich, spoiled brat, the name (and accompanying SIN and ID) is like a get-out-of-jail-free card for small misdemeanors (such as being caught carrying a weapon, casting an unauthorized mental manipulation spell, or driving a car without a license). Even when trying to act tough, local minor NPCs suffer a -2 dice pool modifier on Social tests against the character. In order to have this quality the character must also possess the SINner (National or Corporate) quality. Remember that this quality also makes the character very easy to identify if those not concerned with their family name start asking questions.

RESTRICTED GEAR

COST: 10 KARMA PER ITEM

Right place, right time, right friend, or the stars aligned. No matter the reason, the character has managed to acquire or get a line on one piece of really hard-to-find gear she absolutely had to have. The character can take this quality up to three times; only one of those times can occur at character creation. Selecting it at character creation allows the character to buy a piece of gear with an Availability of up to 24 (circumventing the normal Availability limit at character creation). After character creation, taking this quality lets the character purchase one piece of gear with an Availability up to 18 during play with just a single commcall. They do, however, have to pay an extra thirty percent for the item.

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

COST: 4 KARMA

The streets were this character's classroom. Thanks to all the time spent trying to stay one step ahead of the next guy, and knowing that knowledge is power on the streets, the character can buy Street Knowledge skills at a rate of 2 for 1 during character creation. After character creation, Street Knowledge skill ranks of 3 or higher receive a 1 Karma cost reduction for each rank.

SENSE OF DIRECTION

COST: 3 KARMA

Sometimes the compass asks *you* which way is north. This quality allows even the most citified character to always know true north. With even a single rank in the Survival skill, she can always retrace her path. She can also estimate distances traveled accurately within a few meters as long as she is alert and able to perceive her surroundings when traveling. The quality offers a +1 dice pool modifier on Navigation skill tests.

SENSEI

COST: 5 KARMA

You don't know what you don't know. This quality gives you someone who knows what you don't know and has chosen you to be the recipient of their knowledge. The character selects a skill or skill group for their Sensei to have mastered when the quality is purchased. They must have a contact of Connection Rating 3 or higher with expertise in the area they will teach the character. If they choose a single skill, the Sensei has the skill at a Rating of 13, as well as an Instruction Test dice pool of 10 and a limit of 7. If a skill group is chosen, the Sensei has it at 12 and has an Instruction Test dice pool of 12 with a limit of 8. The Sensei charges nothing for her services to the character, and she generally should be available to the character, though the specifics of the relationship are under the gamemaster's discretion.

SOLID/LEGENDARY REP

COST: 2 TO 4 KARMA

The character has a solid (2 Karma) or legendary (4 Karma) reputation within a certain group. He did something amazing for the group once; old members talk about it with fond memories and new recruits want to find out all about it. The character gets a Reputation bump with a certain specific group; +1 for a solid rep, +2 for a legendary rep. Even if the character goes on to do negative things to that group, his reputation is such that people want to believe it's a just a misunderstanding. The selected group should generally have around one to five thousand members. The quality can only be taken once.

SPEED READING

COST: 2 KARMA

When you found out the professor was offering an open-book final that could count as one hundred percent of your grade, you covered a year's tuition by betting you could ace it without ever attending a single class. With this quality, a character can read through a full page of written text (about 800 words) in about five seconds or an 800-page textbook in about an hour. The information read is not memorized (unless the character also possesses the Photographic Memory quality, p. 76, *SR5*, which allows a test for anything in the book after it is read), but the reader can gain a basic understanding of the contents. If attempting to locate a specific piece of information, phrase, or subject while in the process of reading, the character can attempt a Logic + Intuition Extended Test with a threshold and interval determined by the gamemaster based on the

length of the text, its complexity, and the obscurity of the information being sought.

SPIKE RESISTANCE

COST: 10 KARMA PER RATING (MAX RATING 3)

Characters with this quality have an inherent resistance to harmful forms of biofeedback such as black IC, dump shock, black hammer, etc. For every level (up to three), the character gains a +1 dice pool modifier to resist damage from harmful biofeedback.

SPIRIT WHISPERER

COST: 8 KARMA

There is something about you that makes some spirits want to avoid you—while others seem oddly drawn to you. Spirits add 1 die when resisting Summoning Tests from characters with this quality. However, if the character succeeds in the test, the spirit summoned is always at 1 point of Force stronger than chosen. For all purposes, the character is considered to have summoned the spirit at the declared Force—it simply shows up at 1 point of Force higher than expected. Summoned spirits behave rather curiously toward the character, asking questions about the character's past, though no amount of mastery can compel them to reveal why they are so curious and why they show up stronger than summoned (the gamemaster should play up this mystery; it could even be the basis of an eventual campaign).

STEELY EYED WHEELMAN

COST: 2 KARMA

No turn too tight. When making Vehicle tests, Terrain Modifiers are reduced by 1 to a minimum of 0.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

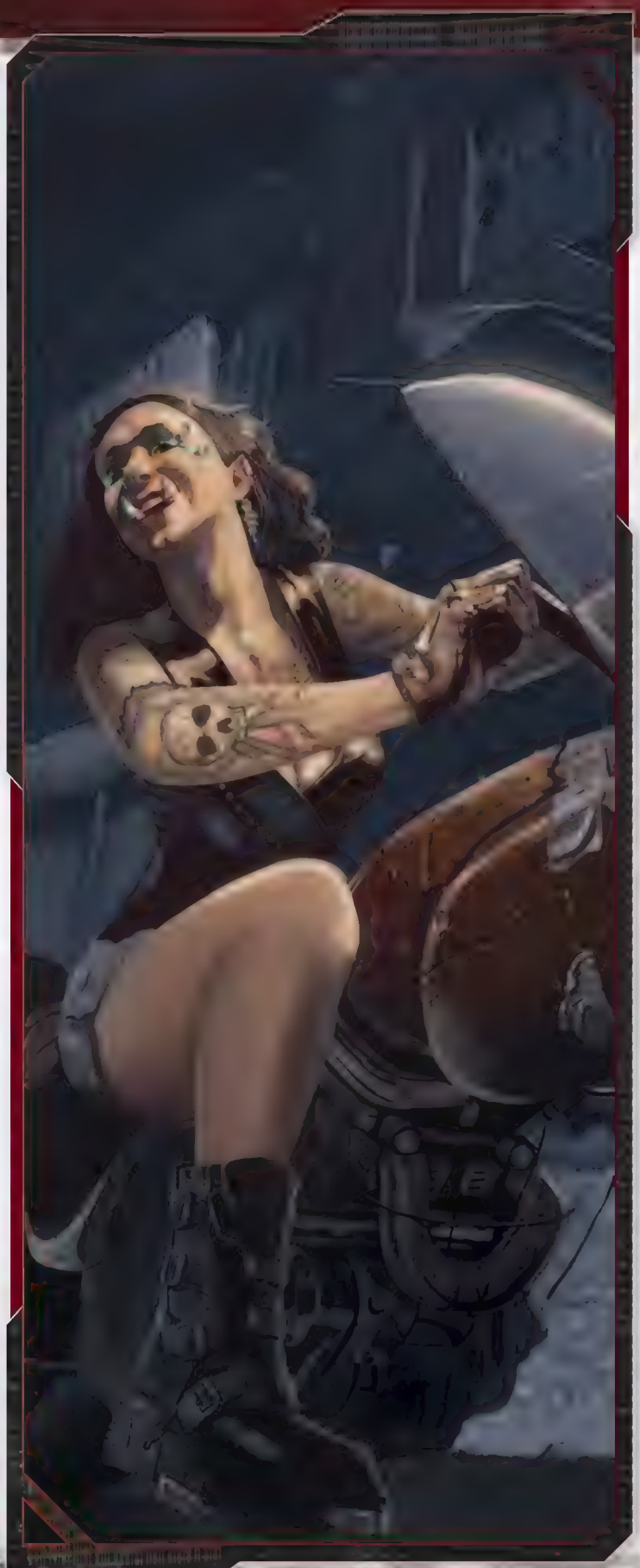
COST: 4 KARMA

All your schoolbooks focus on the practical and real-life working world. Thanks to time spent being formally educated in a technical school, the character can buy Professional Knowledge skills at a rate of 2 for 1 during character creation. After character creation, Professional Knowledge skill ranks of 3 or higher receive a 1 Karma cost reduction for each rank.

TOUGH AS NAILS

COST: 5 TO 20 KARMA

"Hit me!" is your favorite phrase. This quality can be taken up to 4 times, each time providing one additional box to either the character's Physical or Stun Condition monitor, up to a maximum of 3 on any one Condition monitor.



TRUST FUND

COST: 5, 10, 15, OR 20 KARMA

Everyone knows you're in the shadows for the rush or to fulfill some kind of Batman wannabe fantasy. Every month your trust fund spills out enough to live off, but just living is boring. A character with this quality possesses a lifelong trust fund or inheritance that is managed by another party (a trustee). The quality has four versions depending on just how rich and shady a runner is willing to be. For 5 Karma, the trust fund income covers a Middle lifestyle with 500 nuyen left over each month. For 10 Karma, the income covers a Low Lifestyle but offers the character 2,000 + (3D6 x 100) nuyen each month thanks to a deal with their landlord to rip off the trustee. For 15 Karma, the income covers a High Lifestyle with 1,000 nuyen left over. For 20 Karma, the money covers a Middle Lifestyle and offers 3,000 + (6d6 x 100) nuyen thanks to one of those special deals. The character must also possess the SINner (National or Corporate) quality; additionally, the lifestyle they pay for cannot be paid for through other sources and is part of the records connected to the SIN. None of these lifestyles can be shared on a long-term basis, as the landlords are leery of anyone staying at the place and possibly ruining their deal. Note that there is a chance that if the character is caught breaking the law, the trustee may suspend benefits at the gamemaster's discretion.

TRUSTWORTHY

COST: 15 KARMA

There's just something about your baby face, good manners, or personality that makes others want to trust you. This quality provides a +1 dice pool modifier to all Skill Tests for skills in the Influence skill group and increases the character's Social Limit by 2 for situations involving trusting the character.

VEHICLE EMPATHY

COST: 7 KARMA

Sometimes you feel like your heart pumps 108 octane instead of simple blood. Characters with this quality have an inexplicable understanding of and connection with anything they drive. Whenever the character is in physical control of a vehicle, either through manual controls or jacked into the vehicle via cable (but not Jumped In), they gain a +1 dice pool modifier for all appropriate Pilot Skill tests and increase the Handling Rating by 1.

WATER SPRITE

COST: 6 KARMA

You sure you're not part merrow? This quality provides a +2 dice pool modifier to all Diving and Swimming tests, as well as tests related to holding your breath and treading water.

WITNESS MY HATE (MAGICIANS ONLY)

COST: 7 KARMA

All of a spellcasting character's single-target Direct Damage spells are resolved at +2 DV. However, such reckless channeling of destructive forces wreaks havoc on the character's system. The Drain code for any affected Direct Damage spells is increased by +2.

NEGATIVE QUALITIES

You've seen the good and now it's time for the bad. Negative qualities can provide a little extra Karma at character creation but they can also be earned during game play. Need a little extra cash, go In Debt to your local Mafia Don; need to make it back, get a Day Job to earn some funds, but remember that once the mob has their claws in you, they're not that easy to get out. It'll take the gamemaster's approval and the requisite Karma (p. 106, *SR5*) to be able to buy off a negative quality, and don't be surprised if the gamemaster lines up a few role-playing hoops along the way.

ALBINISM

BONUS: 4 OR 8 KARMA

While the little white bunnies are cute, a character with this quality will likely get a moniker like Powder, Whitey, or Snowflake. Albinism is a genetic disorder that results in a partial or complete lack of pigmentation in the eyes, skin, and hair. While the lack of pigment in the hair and skin results in white colorations, lack of pigment in the eyes results in pink or crystal blue irises, with bright red pupils. Due to the lack of melanin, the compound that provides the pigmentation, characters with this quality lack ultraviolet light protection, making them very photosensitive and prone to sunburn. All ethnicities, metatypes, and metavariants can manifest albinism; in fact, all species can manifest albinism, including sapient paracritters.

Characters with this quality face a Weak Glare penalty to all actions when working in regular indoor lighting as well as during a bright but overcast day, and a Moderate Glare penalty when working on a sunny day. All other Glare modifiers are also increased by one level versus albino characters. Normal compensation methods work to mitigate the modifiers.

Due to the lack of protective pigmentation in their skin, characters with this quality suffer sunburn more quickly. Halve the duration between resistance tests when exposed to the sun for extended periods (p. 148, *Run & Gun*).

Characters who gain cybereyes at any point in the character creation process only gain 4 Karma at char-

acter creation. If an albino character gains cybereyes during game play, they must buy down this quality to the 4 Karma level as soon as they have the Karma, and cannot spend Karma on anything else until the quality is bought down.

AMNESIA

BONUS: 4 OR 8 KARMA

More than just one night of drunken partying or even a few days' blackout from a healthy dose of laés, this level of memory loss is far deeper and more profound. The loss can be from injury, magic, drugs, or something unknown and sinister (cough ... CFD ... cough), and it can be either a simple surface memory loss or a complete neural deletion. The two levels of loss offer differing Karma values and differing levels of difficulty for the mind-wiped shadowrunner.

Surface Loss (4 Karma): This character suffers from the classic movie amnesia where they don't remember who they are or their life before a certain moment, but they retain knowledge of their skills and general abilities. They aren't quite sure how they learned them, or where, but they at least have those abilities at their disposal. What they lack are knowledge skills. The gamemaster determines a back-story based on the character the player creates and notes their knowledge skills. As a skill becomes relevant to the game, the gamemaster can make a secret roll for the character and provide the information in a flash of realization.

But these skills don't just appear out of thin air for nothing. In order to access a Knowledge skill, a character needs to decide to buy it. If the skill is already on their list, 2 Karma buys an additional rank of the skill and that small bit of their history can be revealed. If the skill is not on their list they pay for it normally. A player could choose to never buy back their skills and always be at the mercy of the gamemaster, or simply build up their new identity with what they learn on the streets.

Neural Deletion (8 Karma): This is something that should be discussed and worked out with the gamemaster before choosing it, or can be part of a gamemaster's plan for starting a new campaign with willing (note that word!) players. The player(s) start with a very limited level of knowledge as to what their character(s) can do. A nice gamemaster may allow for a list of skills they seem to know something about, or they can choose to reveal nothing but the basics, such as Physical Attributes and gear. Mental Attributes, skills, qualities, and even Edge should start as a mystery, and players learn about their character as they go.

One of the most important things to remember about choosing this is that your history is out of your hands and, at times, so is your character creation. If you want this level of Amnesia, talk to your gamemaster and then wait for your character sheet and hold on for dear life because you're in for a bumpy and wildly fun ride.

The player can only fully regain control of their character by spending the Karma to buy off this quality and completing whatever in-game goals the gamemaster designs.

ASTHMA

BONUS: 8 KARMA

When they gave you the street name Wheezy, you thought how awesome it was to get a classic but rare sitcom reference. Then you realized it was because of your asthma, and it wasn't so cool. Whether it was in your genetic code, or forced on you by a virus or pollution, you've got the wheezes, more professionally known as chronic asthma. When it kicks in you endure wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing. In other words, some serious distractions from hacking, shooting, fighting, casting, summoning, and just about anything else that requires even a modicum of concentration.

Characters with asthma suffer additional, and more rapid, effects from all forms of Fatigue. Whenever considering a Fatigue damage effect, the character faces the damage twice as often and suffers additional effects as soon as they start taking damage based on the Asthma Effects table.

ASTHMA EFFECTS TABLE

ALL EFFECTS ARE CUMULATIVE
1 box of damage: Wheezing; –1 dice pool modifier to all Physical Actions; Social Limit decreased by 1
2 boxes: Shortness of breath; –1 dice pool modifier to all Actions; Social Limit decreased by 1 additional point
4 boxes: Chest tightness; further Fatigue damage resisted with only Willpower
8 boxes: Wracking cough; –1 dice pool modifier to all Actions; Social Limit decreased by 1 additional point

BI-POLAR

BONUS: 7 KARMA

A character with this quality fluctuates between periods of depression, stability, and mania. During manic periods, the character gains a +1 dice pool modifier to any tests involving Agility or Reaction. At the same time, the inability to focus for extended periods of time results in a -2 dice pool modifier for tests involving Logic or Intuition. During depressive periods, the character is lethargic, unmotivated, and unable to focus. Apply a -2 dice pool modifier to any tests involving Agility, Reaction, Logic, and Intuition. During stable times, the character feels balanced and suffers no difficulties except for those they impose on themselves.

The gamemaster rolls a die to determine the character's current mental state. This roll should occur at the beginning of the game session, whenever the character gets a shift in activity (sleep, after a run, during a long stakeout, etc.), or whenever the gamemaster feels like it, but at least once per day. On a result of 1 or 2, the character is in a depressed state, on a 3 or 4 the character is in a manic state, and on a 5 or 6 the character is stable.

Medication to stabilize Bi-polar characters is available at a cost of 500 nuyen a month, but requires a prescription and a SIN (a fake SIN is, of course, a viable option). Failing to take meds for more than twelve hours results in a die roll by the gamemaster. On the street, the meds go for 100 nuyen per daily dose.

BIG REGRET

BONUS: 5 KARMA

Mistakes happen. Sometime in the character's past they did something serious that they regret; maybe they spent time as a bunraku puppet, maybe they were part of a major political affair, or they were involved in the wrong corporate project, but it has to be something truly unpleasant (gamemaster's discretion). The character decreases their Social Limit by 3 against anyone who knows about their past. This could result in a case of blackmail if the wrong person knows the truth. The character cannot buy off this quality unless it becomes public, at which point she gains 1 point of Notoriety and must buy off the quality as soon as possible.

BLIND

BONUS: 15 KARMA (5 KARMA FOR CHARACTERS WITH ACCESS TO ASTRAL SIGHT)

Characters with this quality are completely blind and can perceive nothing visually. This means they automatically fail all vision-based Perception Tests. They also face a -4 dice pool modifier for general Perception tests, a -3 dice pool modifier for Surprise Tests, Blind Fire when in Ranged Combat, Total Darkness in Melee Combat, and any other relevant modifiers at the gamemaster's discretion. The character cannot use cybereyes, as the blindness is a nerve issue, leaving them incapable of processing any visual stimuli, regardless of the source.

Since astral sight is not a truly visual sense, Awakened characters who are blind can still use astral perception all the time and at least have some sense of objects in the world, but gamemasters should apply the customary -2 dice pool modifier to all actions performed on the physical plane while perceiving the astral, including indirect combat spells, and keep in mind the differences between the astral and physical worlds.

BORROWED TIME

BONUS: 20 KARMA

Runners face death on a regular basis, but usually they learn the best ways to avoid it. This quality makes avoiding it impossible; the inevitable is at your door, you're just waiting for it to knock. It may be a fatal disease, a slow-acting poison, a precarious blockage, or a ticking cortex bomb, but no matter the source, death could arrive at any moment. There is no set time limit on the character's expiration, only a deadly combination of three dice. At the beginning of each game session the gamemaster rolls three dice in secret; three of a kind means times up. At some point during that game session, at the perfect dramatic moment, the character dies.

This quality cannot be bought off. If the player changes their mind and wants their character to survive, the gamemaster can allow the character to survive, at a cost. When their number's up (and not before), the character must burn all their current Edge to stay alive. The quality then goes away.

COMPUTER ILLITERATE

BONUS: 7 KARMA

There are characters who aren't tech-savvy and characters who just don't understand technology, and then there are characters with this quality. These characters have no experience at working with AR, computers, commlinks, and other electronic devices. They have difficulty performing even simple tasks such as making commcalls, sending e-mails, instant messaging, programming a trideo recorder, using a commlink, or doing a Matrix search. This quality provides a -4 dice pool modifier to all tests that involve a computer, electronic device, or Matrix-connected system of any kind. During stressful or tense situations, the gamemaster may require a Success Test, with the modifier, to complete tasks others would take for granted.

CREATURE OF COMFORT

BONUS: 10, 17, OR 25 KARMA

For the character with this quality, the rewards of a job well done are the finer things in life. Unfortunately, one can quickly get attached to the comforts one has acquired, making the fall seem ever so higher. At the 10 Karma level, the character is used to a Middle Lifestyle, at the 17 level a High, and 25, it's Luxury all the way, baby.

For every day that the character must spend "slumming" it in a lower Lifestyle category, the irritable character suffers a -1 penalty to all Social and Healing tests per Lifestyle category below his chosen level. For example, if the character takes this Quality at the High Lifestyle level and is forced to stay in a Squatter Lifestyle, he will suffer -3 to all Social and Healing tests. Life just isn't worth living without Cognac.

DAY JOB

BONUS: 5 TO 15 KARMA

When running in the shadows, sometimes you need a way to fill your days, or to maintain your cover. This quality burdens a character with responsibilities and time commitments. While the regular income is nice, having a regular schedule and a boss to answer to doesn't jibe well with the shadowrunning profession. The player and gamemaster should work together to determine the job, which is usually a pretty decent gig based on the pay rates, but the gamemaster should determine the shifts the character works. In order to establish the legitimacy of the day job, the character must possess a valid SIN (SINner quality or at least a Rating 4 fake SIN). If they have the SINner quality, the money from the Day Job quality is considered already taxed. If they are using a fake and it gets burned or connected to a crime, expect the cops to come down hard and the job is lost until the situation is cleared up.

When combined with the Fame quality, this could easily bring in enough money to support the character, so make sure they have a good reason to run the shadows.

The Day Job table provides the Karma, income, and hours breakdown for the quality.

During runs, the gamemaster should keep track of how many consecutive days are being spent on shadowrunning activity and whether the character can fulfill their day job responsibilities. If they can't, they get a warning; if it happens again after a warning, they lose their job. Losing their job costs them 2 points of Street Cred (how can you be trusted as a runner if you can't even hold a job as a fry cook?) and costs the character a month of salary due to purchases they made in anticipation of their pay.

DAY JOB TABLE

KARMA VALUES	SALARY/MONTH	HOURS/WEEK
5	1,000¥	10
10	2,500¥	20
15	5,000¥	40

DEAF

BONUS: 15 KARMA

Characters with this quality are completely deaf and can perceive no sound at all. This means they automatically fail all audio-based Perception Tests. They also face a -2 dice pool modifier for general Perception tests, a -3 dice pool modifier for Surprise Tests, and any other modifiers at the gamemaster's discretion.

DID YOU JUST CALL ME DUMB?

BONUS: 3 KARMA

The character can't resist camouflaging insults into well-spoken words. The character gets the satisfaction of feeling superior to everyone. Unfortunately, once in a while people will notice and get pretty upset. Any Glitch rolled by this character on any Social test always counts as a Critical Glitch.

DIMMER BULB

BONUS: 5 KARMA PER LEVEL (MAX 3 LEVELS)

Maybe it was one too many hits to the head, maybe the character's mother dropped her as a baby, or maybe she never got into that whole "thinking" thing, but whatever the cause, the character does not tend to shine in the mental arena. For every level of this quality, the character faces a -1 dice pool modifier on all tests involving Logic or Intuition.

DRIVEN

BONUS: 2 KARMA

The character has an obsession, something that drives them forward. Everything they do is designed to bring them one step closer to solving the enigma in their life. This can be finding a disappeared loved one, discovering a hidden truth about themselves, or even getting revenge on an old enemy. Whatever the cause, when faced with a clue or opportunity to advance their quest, the character must make a Willpower + Logic (4) Test to not immediately drop everything and pursue this new information. Unless the character succeeds, they will sacrifice anything and anyone to get closer to the truth. On the other hand, such single-minded obsession makes the character a tough nut to crack. As long as the character is actively working a lead, he gains +1 to his Willpower.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

BONUS: 5 KARMA

The character has an irrational emotional attachment to a piece of gear. The character will always use this item, even if presented with a "better" option. Furthermore, if lost in some manner, the character will do everything in his power, up to and including risking his life and that of his teammates, to retrieve his item. If the piece of gear is irretrievably lost or damaged, the player must either immediately spend Karma to buy off the quality or suffer a -1 penalty on all tests that would have used that piece of gear for a six-month period. After that time, they learn to love a replacement piece of gear, and the quality transfers to that item.

EX-CON

BONUS: 15 KARMA

Runners often brag that they'd go down in a blaze of glory before they let the pawns bring them down. The prison system is full of them. A character with this quality is fresh out of the joint and still on the legal leash, so they have several drawbacks.

First, the local police corporation has a full file and rundown on the character, including augmentations, magical training, known associates, biometric data, a material link, etc. This file is duplicated by the local prison corporation if they are different than the police force and is connected to their nice new Criminal SIN (sorry, no extra points there). Plus, the character cannot have any Restricted or Forbidden augmentations, as the prison system removes them to protect the other inmates and staff (and sell them to the black market).

Second, the character is on parole and has to check in with their parole officer (PO) twice a week via the Matrix and once a week in person. Plus, the PO can choose to make a house call any time they want. Whether the gamemaster wants the character to have a sleazy or a squeaky clean PO is up to them, but each creates their own bundle of problems.

Third, the character is known to be an ex-con and is limited in their choice of contacts. Street-level folks will still freely associate with the runner—hell, they might even commiserate while waiting in their mutual PO's waiting room. Corp contacts will only associate with the character if they have a Loyalty Rating of 4 or higher, and law enforcement contacts only stick by the runner if they have a Loyalty Rating of 5 or 6.

If the character ever gets past their parole or creates a new life for him- or herself, this quality must be bought off or replaced with other negative qualities of equal or greater value.

FLASHBACKS

BONUS: 7 OR 15 KARMA

Whether due to PTSD, mental torture, psychotropic IC, or just a scarring experience, the character suffers vivid memory-based sensory hallucinations. The flashbacks are triggered by a specific stimulus. Whenever the character encounters their trigger stimulus, they must make a Composure (5) Test or become incapacitated for (5 - hits) Combat Turns. During the flashback, the character is unable to perform any useful action and may instead perform physical actions reflecting their mental misperceptions.

During character creation, work with the gamemaster to determine the stimulus and Karma value based on how common that stimulus will be in the campaign. The stimulus can be any sensory input, including something on the astral plane or in the Matrix. A 7 Karma stimulus should come up about once every other shadowrun, while the 15 Karma stimulus should pop up at least once in every game session.

HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN

BONUS: 10 KARMA

The character has survived on the streets for so long that anything else makes them distrustful and suspicious. The character will not choose to stay in accommodations above Squatter. If, for example, the team elects to spend the night in a Middle Lifestyle hotel, or even a squalid Low Lifestyle motel, the character will walk out and find a comfortable alley to sleep in rather than bear this "luxury." If forced to stay somewhere above Squatter, the character will be at -2 to all his Mental attributes as he becomes confused, erratic, and agitated until such a time as he is able to spend a day in a Squatter or Street lifestyle to rezone himself.

HUNG OUT TO DRY

BONUS: 8 KARMA

Welcome to the world of social shunning. For some reason, unknown to the character, her contacts have suddenly clammed up and stopped answering her calls, and new connections she makes suddenly dry up when they get wind of her social pariah status. The gamemaster knows the reason no one will talk to her, and it's up to the character to try to figure it out and maybe clear her name. These events could be the focus of an entire campaign or just a few side-jobs here and there that the character might need to convince her running mates to help her out on.

If other members of the team start to ask around as to why the character is on the outs, their contacts may get a little tight-lipped and may even clam up until the situation is resolved. Once the situation is resolved, the character will need to either buy off this quality or replace it with another of equal value as a result of the events.

ILLITERATE

BONUS: 5 KARMA

Though literacy is not really necessary thanks to the advances of the Sixth World, most folks can at least sound out "See Spot run." Whether because she grew up in the wild (urban, rural, or otherwise), or just never had the opportunity, the character cannot read a lick. She can ask others, use an agent program, or get software on her commlink to scan and read things aloud, but anyone aware of this intellectual deficit will look negatively on the character, reducing her Social Limit by 1. The illiterate character also suffers a -2 dice pool modifier when working with computer/commlink systems and electronics other than her own due to her unfamiliarity with their iconography. Also, during character creation the character cannot choose any Knowledge skill that may have required even the most minimal of reading, and during game play all Knowledge skills that require reading cost double the Karma for the character until she learns to read and buys off this quality.

IN DEBT

BONUS: 1 TO 15 KARMA

Whether it came betting the ponies or buying that new pony, the character owes money to an unsavory third party. The player and gamemaster must work out the details, but the happy thing is, for every point of Karma (up to 15) spent to be In Debt, the character gets 5,000 nuyen to spend during character creation. These points are spent in place of the normal Karma for extra cash and extend the possible additional funds to 75,000¥.

Now it's time for the bad news. The character now owes some nasty people the amount they borrowed, plus another fifty percent, and the amount increases by ten percent every month until it's paid off. If the character misses a monthly payment, which has to be at least the interest for the month, they take 1 box of Physical damage for every 20,000 nuyen they owe. This can't be resisted and can't be healed until they pay their minimum as their friendly neighborhood lender sent the appropriate message and then leans on them until they get their money. They can also expect to be asked to do some discount work and maybe even a few favors while they have the debt hanging over their head.

The quality can be bought off if the character has both enough Karma and cash to pay the debt. If they only have the cash but not the Karma, they can trade for another negative quality of equal Karma. If they don't want to do that, then the lenders suddenly become scarce, and the character is unable to make the payment until interest compounds again, leaving them deeper in debt.

INCOMPLETE DEPROGRAMMING

BONUS: 10 KARMA

Sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't. A character with this quality was once mentally programmed to be a deep-cover agent for an agency. When they left, their deprogramming wasn't completed properly for some reason. Since then the character has had occasional, often unexpected, shifts back to their cover identity.

Whenever this character faces a stressful situation such as an interrogation, combat, or even just an injury, they must make a Composure (4) Test. Failure means the cover identity comes out and takes control for either 1D6 minutes or whatever length of time the gamemaster desires. The altered psychological state is not stable, though, and another stressful situation can call for another Composure (4) Test and another personality shift. This can occur over and over during the same firefight.

During these states the character forgets their badass runner identity and the skills that go with it, and they turn back into mild-mannered everyday Joe. This includes loss of skills while the cover identity is in charge. The gamemaster can create a secondary character for the player to use during these times, ask them to step out while they run the NPC, or make them sit and watch in humiliation as their character screams like a child and runs for cover or simply wanders up to the guard booth, seemingly lost in the middle of the secure facility.

As if all of this wasn't bad enough, behaviors like this look an awful lot like CFD, and people are going to start wondering if you're a head case.

INFIRM

BONUS: 5 TO 25 KARMA

Characters with this quality often think, "I should hit the gym" but rarely get past buying the membership, or they're on the downward slope of life and just too old for this drek. The quality represents some kind of diminished physical fitness aptitude. For every 5 Karma, the character drops all of their Physical Attribute maximums by one. The quality can be taken up to five times, but no Attribute maximum can be dropped below 1. Along with this natural cap, the character can never have a Physical Attribute modified beyond this maximum by any source—magic, machine or otherwise—as their body is too frail to handle the stress.

The effects of this quality stack with those of the Aged quality from **Bullets & Bandages** (p. 12), so characters need to be careful of not dropping any Attribute maximum lower than one.

LIAR

BONUS: 7 KARMA

You'd never make it as Pinocchio. Everyone around knows the character to be a compulsive liar, and even when she manages to utter the truth, she just sounds false and insincere. Let's look at how this plays out. First, the character receives a -1 dice pool modifier to all Social skill tests. Also, whenever the character addresses someone, the gamemaster rolls 1D6. On a result of 1, the target of the conversation calls bullshit and assumes the character is lying, no matter what they are saying. Trust is lost, conversation is over. This occurs with every conversation the character takes part in. Any NPC who lost trust in the character this way continues to maintain a certain level of mistrust, and the next time they encounter the character, things go wrong on a roll of 1 or 2. If it happens a third time, the character gains a point of Notoriety, and reduces the Loyalty value of the contact by 1 (if it was a contact). If that means they hit Loyalty 0, then say sayonara to that contact.

NIGHT BLINDNESS

BONUS: 6 KARMA

No one understands how dark the shadows are like you. The character's natural vision does not adjust well to poor lighting conditions. All Light/Glare Environmental modifiers are one category worse for the character, with the exception of Full Light/No Glare, which still has no modifier.

This quality is incompatible with any other quality that affects the eyes of the character and must be immediately bought off if the character corrects the issue with cyber- or bioware. If the character does not have enough Karma to buy off the quality, they cannot get the corrective gear.

OBLIVIOUS

BONUS: 6 OR 10 KARMA

The character with this quality fails to notice the troll in the corner with the Panther cannon ... even after they've fired it! A 6 Karma level of Oblivious means a -2 dice pool modifier to all Perception Tests, including standard, Astral, and Matrix. On top of that, at the 10 Karma level, all Perception Test thresholds are increased by 1.

PACIFIST

BONUS: 10 OR 15 KARMA

To hurt another is to mar the soul. This quality represents two levels of moral inflexibility that prevent the character from delivering, or allowing others to deliver, harm to another being. At the 10 Karma level, the character avoids violence not performed in self-defense. The character will not participate in runs involving wetwork and may try to dissuade other team members from doing so. Non-lethal attacks (gel rounds, tasers, flash-bangs, stun spells, etc.) are still considered "violent," and may only be used in self-defense—after an opponent has clearly attacked the character, other team members, or innocent bystanders.

At the 15 Karma level, the character will not commit any violence regardless of provocation or threat to themselves or others. If the character commits any act of violence they are stricken with a powerful sense of guilt and suffer a -1 dice pool modifier to all tests involving Mental attributes until the character succeeds at a Charisma + Willpower (20, 1 day) Extended Test. If the character does not succeed at the test within seven days, they lose 1 point of Willpower or Charisma, whichever is higher. The loss is permanent, but the -1 dice pool modifier to tests involving Mental attributes goes away. If the character actually kills someone (or even thinks they did), the dice pool modifier becomes -2, the Extended Test interval changes to 1 week, and the character's Mental Limit is decreased by 1.

PARANOIA

BONUS: 7 KARMA

It's only paranoia if they aren't out to get you. In the shadows, being cautious is often mistaken for being paranoid, but there's a dramatic difference between the two. A character with this quality truly thinks everyone is out to get her. Whether this is really the case, or simply a matter of an overactive imagination, the character faces a -2 dice pool modifier on all Social Tests involving contacts with a Loyalty less than 4 or any generally unfamiliar person. The character also refuses to ever give out her address or any information on where she lives and must change living spaces every few months to ease their fear of being found.

PARAPLEGIC

BONUS: 10 KARMA

Characters with this quality are paralyzed from the waist down. They can perform any physical tasks that do not require the use of their legs, and locomotion usually occurs via wheelchair or wheelchair drone. The character is fast, with a walking speed of Agility x 3 and running speed of Agility x 4, regardless of metatype (shadowrunners get the fast and agile wheelchairs of marathoners and murderball athletes, not slow and cumbersome chairs). They have trouble, though, with stairs and curbs, which can prevent them from getting where they need to go.

The paralysis can be permanent or a temporary condition while the character builds up funds to get surgery to fix the cause. Once the repair is done, the quality has to be bought off. The character has a lot of additional expenses to make the world more manageable. To reflect this, their Lifestyle cost is increased by 10 percent (cumulative with racial modifiers) and vehicles need to be modified, increasing their price by 5 percent, or have a Rigger Interface (p. 461, *SR5*) for DNI control.

The quality does not affect the character's abilities in astral space or the Matrix.

PHOBIA

BONUS: 5 TO 15 KARMA

Fear is the mind-killer. It can also cause reactions from distraction to utter panic. A character with this quality has a visceral fear of some kind that shakes them whenever they are exposed. The severity of the fear determines their reaction to it and any modifiers they may face in its presence. That, combined with how frequently they may be exposed to their object of apprehension, determines the Karma value of the quality based on the Phobia table.

Mild phobias cause a -1 dice pool modifier to all actions while in the presence of their source. Moderate phobias cause a -3 dice pool modifier to all actions while in the presence of their source, and the character must succeed on a Composure (2) Test or feel a strong need to get away from the source of their fear. A Severe phobia causes the character to face a -6 dice pool modifier, requires a Composure (5) Test to stay in its presence, and if the Composure Test is failed the character must move away for at least (5 - hits) Combat Turns.

PHOBIA TABLE

CONDITION	KARMA	DESCRIPTION
Uncommon	2	The triggering condition is relatively rare, such as the smell of roses or specific insects.
Common	5	The triggering condition is commonly encountered, such as sunlight, trolls, insects in general, magic, the outdoors, or crowds.

SEVERITY	KARMA	EFFECTS
Mild	3	–1 dice pool modifier to all actions
Moderate	5	–3 dice pool modifier to all actions; Composure (2) Test or must get away from the source
Severe	10	–6 dice pool modifier; Composure (5) Test or must flee from the source for (5 – hits) Combat Turns

PIE IESU DOMINE. DONA EIS REQUIEM.

BONUS: 2 KARMA

The character is a flagellant, believing in causing himself pain to serve a greater good. Perhaps they seek clarity through pain; perhaps it is a constant act of contrition for their deeds. Whatever the reason, the character gains High Pain Tolerance 1 but always starts the day with 1 box of Physical damage. This box can be healed, but the character will seek to cause himself another box of damage as soon as possible. Note that the character's wounds may cause questions in certain social settings, should anyone notice.

POOR SELF CONTROL

BONUS: 4 TO 12 KARMA

Whether they're a boaster, an adrenaline junkie, or just can't stand disorder, characters with this quality span a variety of mental ticks that all boil down to the inability to control one's actions. The Karma costs vary based on the threshold of the Composure test involved in restraining the character's actions. The quality can be taken multiple times, but only once for each form of control issue.

Braggart (5 Karma): No one has ever done it bigger or better than her. The character will always try to top anyone else's claims of success, even to the point of lying about it. This may result in them being ignored, considered infantile, or challenged to prove their superiority, but without a Composure (3) Test they won't back down from the brag.

Thrill-Seeker (4 Karma): It's all about the rush. The character will always take the most dangerous and risky option in any situation if they don't succeed at a Composure (2) Test. There is a slight payoff, as the adrenaline rush provides a +1 to their Initiative Score for 5 Combat Turns (meaning that is how long the bonus lasts, not that the character gets an additional bonus each turn).

Compulsive (4 To 12 Karma): There is an order to all things that must be maintained, and the character feels the need to exert their sense of order on everything. The value of this mental malady comes from how severe the compulsion is and how much of a negative impact it can have on the character. Maybe she likes a tidy house, maybe she sees a necessary order to the items on the tables out in the world, or maybe she feels the need to practice her skills (be they hacking, casting, shooting, talking, stealing, sneaking, etc.) every chance she gets. The character must make a Composure (2) test to resist the compulsion. The base Karma value is (2 x threshold needed for Composure Test; must be from 1 to 4); then add 2 for things in the character's personal environment (e.g., placement of furniture and minor appliances), 3 for a single aspect of the public environment (e.g., correcting bad apostrophes on signs, counting every Ford Americar they see), or 4 for a broad aspect of the public environment (e.g., touching every light post they walk by, hacking into every camera they see).

Vindictive (5 Karma): Though best served cold, the thought of vengeance sure makes your blood boil. No matter how small the slight, it cannot go unreturned, and the escalation factor must always be considered. An insult may be returned with a calm threat, a threat might get the same or may require a payment in pain, and any injurious assault must be brought back upon your enemies two-fold (or more). To resist the urge for instant payback, the character must make a successful Composure (2) Test, and even when resisted, the character must add the offender's name to their hit list for the future.

Combat Monster (10 Karma): The red rage blinds to all but victory. A character with this quality loses much of her self-control once a fight has begun. She'll fight until all her opponents are disabled, even if outnumbered and losing, unless she can make a Composure (3) Test to clear her head enough to break off the fight.

RECORDS ON FILE

BONUS: 1 KARMA PER RATING (MAX RATING 10)

For every point of Karma spent on this quality, one of the Big 10 megacorps possesses a relatively up-to-date record of the character's SIN, biometrics, person-

al, and medical data. The gamemaster and player can work together to figure out why they have this data or the player can leave that mystery up to the gamemaster. The data provides the megacorp's agents a +2 dice pool modifier for any tests made to identify the character through their records. Due to the proliferation and saturation of facial recognition and identification systems used by the megacorporations to track consumer habits, representatives of the selected megacorps also have a +2 dice pool modifier on tests to track down or locate the character whenever they are in an area with a C or better security rating. No character can have Records on File and Erased at the same time.

REDUCED (SENSE)

BONUS: 2 TO 29 KARMA

One of the character's five (or six for certain Awakened folks) senses is about as sharp as a butter knife. Any Test involving the chosen sense faces a -2 dice pool modifier. This quality can be taken multiple times, reducing a different sense each time, and its effects are cumulative for tests involving more than one sense, such as general Perception Tests. A character with a reduced sense of smell or taste gains 2 Karma, while a reduced sense of hearing, sight, or astral sight is worth 5 Karma, and a reduced sense of touch is worth 10 Karma because it affects most Physical skill rolls due to lack of tactile sensitivity.

If the sense is ever repaired or corrected permanently, the quality must be bought off. If the character does not have enough Karma to buy off the quality, the intended repair cannot be made. No character can have Reduced (sight) and Blind at the same time, or Reduced (hearing) and Deaf at the same time.

SENSORY OVERLOAD SYNDROME

BONUS: 15 KARMA

Sensory Overload Syndrome (SOS) is a growing epidemic in the world of ever-present AROs and excessive wireless sensory input. The condition is an offshoot of AIPS, and victims suffer similar epileptic episodes. Whenever a character with SOS enters an area of high ARO saturation (gamemaster discretion) or attempts to make use of sensory enhancement systems, they must make a Willpower + Edge (4) Test or enter into an epileptic seizure for (5 - hits) minutes.

The condition can possibly be prevented by deactivating enhancement systems, the character's commlink, or running the commlink in hidden mode, but these last two options create issues in areas where identification is required or suspicious when not broadcast.

SIGNATURE

BONUS: 10 KARMA

The origami swan can mean only one thing. For some reason, a character with this quality feels it is necessary to leave their calling card to announce their involvement in a job. The signature is usually some specific item, symbol, or technique the character uses that identifies their participation. For those who know the character and their signature, the signature is easily identified. Anyone performing a test to identify the character's handiwork or track the character is given a dice pool modifier equal to the character's Street Cred and Public Awareness combined.

VENDETTA

BONUS: 7 KARMA

This is some Hatfield and McCoy-level drek. The character is entangled in a blood feud with an individual or group, and no matter the initial cause, the vendetta is now as much an issue of honor and reputation as revenge. The quality means the character has extreme difficulty resisting a confrontation with her foe.

Whenever the character encounters the target of her ire, she must make a Composure (3) Test or else have no choice but to incite a violent confrontation. If the character should ever neutralize their nemesis, they have two options. They can buy off the quality, or someone new will pick up the vendetta, giving the character gets a new nemesis.

WANTED

BONUS: 10 KARMA

It feels so good to be wanted, or maybe not. Though most runners are probably wanted for questioning in a few cases, this is something different. When the character takes this quality, they work out why they have a bounty or contract on their head. The bounty should be worth at least 25,000 nuyen, enough to tempt even one's own "friends." The character should have to frequently deal with someone coming for them or finding out about the bounty and using it against them.

If for some reason the bounty ever goes away, like the character is turned in or they clear their name, the quality must be bought off with Karma.

BURNED COMPANY MAN

After years of training, years of operating on the company's behalf, and years of absolute loyalty, for some reason the burned company man was blacklisted. He barely had enough time to retrieve his emergency go-bag; all of his accounts were frozen, right when he had the heat on his six. Good thing he kept one account off the books for just such an emergency. Now all he has is a go bag and some spare cred, just enough to secure some drekhole to use as a new base of operations. It's okay, though. He's been in worse fixes before. For years the company sent him to all corners of the world to "facilitate" various operations. He can fight, but he's not a frontline kind of guy. His skillsets are more geared toward planning, working the angles, and analyzing the big picture. The company made a big mistake when they burned him, because he'll never forgive what they did to him. And he certainly won't forget.

METATYPE: DWARF

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
4	4	4 (6)	4	4	3	5	5	5.4	2

Condition Monitor (P/S)	10/10
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 7
Physical Initiative	9 (11) + 1D6
Active Skills	Athletics skill group 3, Close Combat skill group 3, Computer 3, Con 5, Etiquette 4, Firearms skill group 4, First Aid 2, Instruction 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 6, Navigation 2, Negotiation 4, Palming 3, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 1, Pilot Watercraft 1, Sneaking 4, Survival 2, Thrown Weapons 3
Knowledge Skills	Poetry 2, Psychology 3, Small Unit Tactics 2
Languages	Aztlaner Spanish N, English 4, French 2, German 1, Japanese 2
Qualities	Bad Rep, Blandness, Driven, Guts, Insomnia 1, Photographic Memory
Augmentations	Reaction enhancers 2
Gear	Antidote patch (2), certified credstick (gold), concealable holster, cram (2 doses), Erika Elite commlink, fake SIN (Rating 4), fake license (Rating 3, light pistol, SMG), fitted suits, glasses [Capacity 3 w/ image link, smartlink, vision magnification], jazz (2 doses), lined coat [Rating 3 w/ Chemical Protection 1, Fire Resistance 1, Nonconductivity 1], long haul (3 doses), Low lifestyle (2 months), medkit [Rating 4], stim patch (2), tag eraser, trang patch (2)
Weapons	Colt America L36 [Light Pistol, Acc 7(9), DV 7P, AP—, SA, RC —, 11 (c), w/ silencer, smartgun system (external), 3 spare clips, 110 rounds of regular ammo] Colt TZ-120 [SMG, Acc 4(6), DV 7P, AP—, SA/BF/FA, RC 2(3), 32 (c), w/ silencer, smartgun system (external), 3x spare clips, 200 rounds of regular ammo] Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, Acc 4, DV 9S(e), AP –5, SS, RC —, 4 (m), w/ 40 darts] Extendable baton [Club, Acc 5, Reach 1, DV (STR+2)P, AP –] Knife [Blade, Acc 5, Reach -, DV (STR+1)P, AP –1] Throwing knives (2) [Throwing Weapon, Acc Physical, Reach 1, DV (STR+1)P, AP –1] Walther Palm Pistol [Hold-Out, Acc 4, DV 7P, AP—, SS/BF, RC—, 2 (b), w/ 10 rounds of regular ammo]
Contacts	Assassin (Connection 3, Loyalty 2), Disavowed Spy (Connection 3, Loyalty 3), Fixer (Connection 3, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	4,225 + (3D6 + 60)

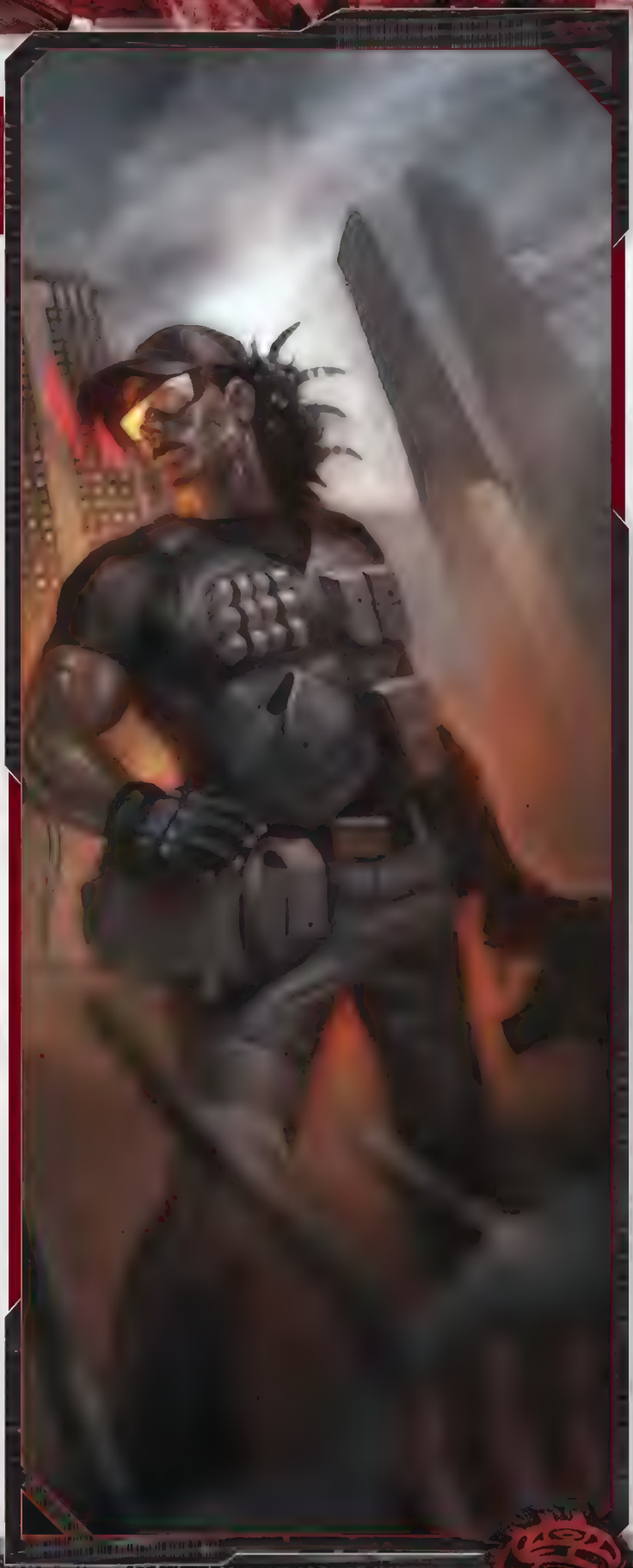
COMBAT MEDIC

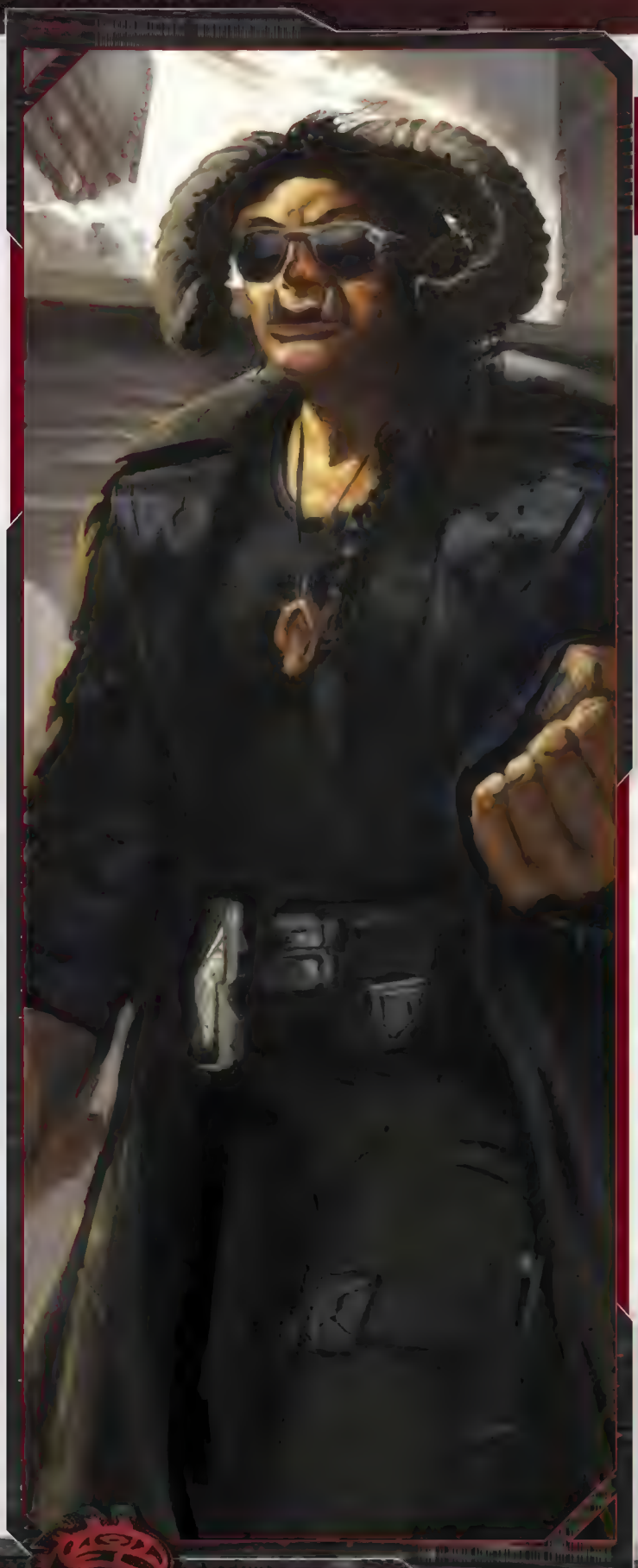
Sometimes called angels of the battlefield, the combat medic is a welcome addition to any team. A hardened veteran of war, he's seen more than his share of death and destruction. Tough both mentally and physically, he's usually the one to run through hellish incoming fire to save the life of a buddy or teammate. A warrior concerned more with preserving life than taking it, he also brings to any battle a wide variety of life-saving options that include potent healing magic and good old-fashioned hands-on first aid. But don't think for a moment that the medic can't defend himself and his patents. Many have learned that the hard way. It takes a special kind of brave (or crazy) to do what he does, because the medic is someone who cares more for the life of others than for his own. For a combat medic, no one is ever left behind.

METATYPE: HUMAN (MYSTIC ADEPT, SHAMAN)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	M
4	4	4	4	5	3	3	5	6	2	5

Condition Monitor (P/S)	10/11
Armor	10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 7
Physical Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Automatics 3, Computer 1, Counterspelling 5, First Aid 6, Gymnastics 3, Navigation 2, Perception 4, Pistols 4, Running 2, Medicine 3, Spellcasting 5, Survival 2, Swimming 1, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills	Mass Casualty Incidents 2, Mercenary Hangouts 3, Triage 3
Languages	Arabic 1, Aztlaner Spanish 2, English N, German 2
Qualities	Code of Honor (Leave No One Behind), Guts, Poor Self Control (Thrill Seeker), Quick Healer, SINner (national), Toughness
Adept Powers	Combat Sense 2, Danger Sense 2, Empathic Healing, Mystic Armor 2, Pain Relief, Pain Resistance 1, Spell Resistance 1
Spells	Antidote, Detect Life, Heal, Increase Reflexes, Levitate, Stabilize, Stunbolt
Gear	3 antidote patches, Ares PED Mark III (w/ oxygen tank), armor jacket [12], binoculars (optical), biomonitor, counterspelling focus 1(combat spells), 3 disposable syringes, flashlight, gas mask, 2 medkits [Rating 3], 6 medkit supplies, monocle [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink], Middle lifestyle (3 months), Narcojet (3 doses), spell formula (manaball, manabolt), spellcasting focus [Rating 2, health spells], subvocal microphone, 3 tranq patches, Transys Avalon commlink, 4 trauma patches
Weapons	HK-227 [Assault Rifle, Acc 4(6), DV 7P, AP—, SA/BF/FA, RC 1, 28 (c), w/ 100 rounds regular ammo, 4 spare clips] Salavette Guardian [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA/BF, RC 1, 12 (c), w/ 60 rounds regular ammo, 4 spare clips] Survival Knife [Blades, Acc 5, Reach—, DV(STR+2)P, AP 1]
Contacts	Fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 2), Street Doc (Connection 2, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	5,070 + (4D6 + 100)





DISGRACED BODYGUARD

So what if it's a stereotype that big, massive, hulking trolls make good bodyguards. It works, so why mess with it? But just because someone has the body, the skills, and the 'ware for the work doesn't mean everything always goes well. Sometimes, the job goes sideways and the principle gets geeked. Maybe she didn't notice something or was just a half a second too slow, or maybe someone else screwed up but she took the heat for it. Now instead of working lucrative corp-executive or celebrity protection details, she's forced to use her skills in the shadows. But the skills she honed in protecting a principle have more than one use—what had been used for defense can also be used to attack. Her role may have changed, but she's still committed to never fail her "principle"—whatever that might be.

METATYPE: TROLL

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
9	5	5 (7)	8	3	2	3	3	2.45	3

Condition Monitor (P/S)	12 (7)
Armor	12
Limits	Physical 10(11), Mental 4, Social 4
Physical Initiative	10 + 1D6
Skills	Blades 3, Clubs 3, Gymnastics 3, Intimidation 3, Perception 4, Pistols 5(6), Unarmed Combat 5(6)
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Culture 3, Entertainment Gossip 3, Psychology 3, Threat Assessment 3
Languages	English N, Japanese 1, Spanish 1
Qualities	Code of Honor (Protect the Principle), Dependents (elderly parent), Disgraced, Guts, SINner (National), Toughness
Augmentations	Bone density augmentation 3, cyberears [Rating 1 w/ audio enhancement 1, select sound filter 1, spatial recognizer], datajack, flare compensation, internal air tank 1, orthoskin 3, reaction enhancer 2, reflex recorder [pistols, unarmed combat], shock hand, smartlink
Gear	2 antidote patches, 2 concealable quick-draw holsters, Executive Suite armor [12], forearm guards [+1], license (professional bodyguard), Low lifestyle (two months), jammer (area, Rating 3), spare ammo (100 rounds regular, heavy pistol), 2 stim patches, subvocal microphone, 2 trauma patches
Weapons	Savalette Guardian [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (7), DV 8P, AP –5, SA/BF, RC 1, 12 (c), w/ 60 rounds APDS ammo, 4 spare clips] Savalette Guardian [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (7), DV 8S*/6S(e)**, AP–2**/–5***, SA/BF, RC 1, 12 (c), w/ 30 gel rounds, 30 rounds Stick-n-Shock ammo, 4 spare clips] * gel round stats ** Shock hand [Reach 1, Acc Physical, DV 9S(e), AP –5] Telescoping staff [Club, Acc 4, Reach 2, DV (STR+2)P, AP—]
Contacts	Corporate Administrative Assistant (Connection 3, Loyalty 2); Fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 2)
Starting ¥	3,580 + (3D6 x 60)

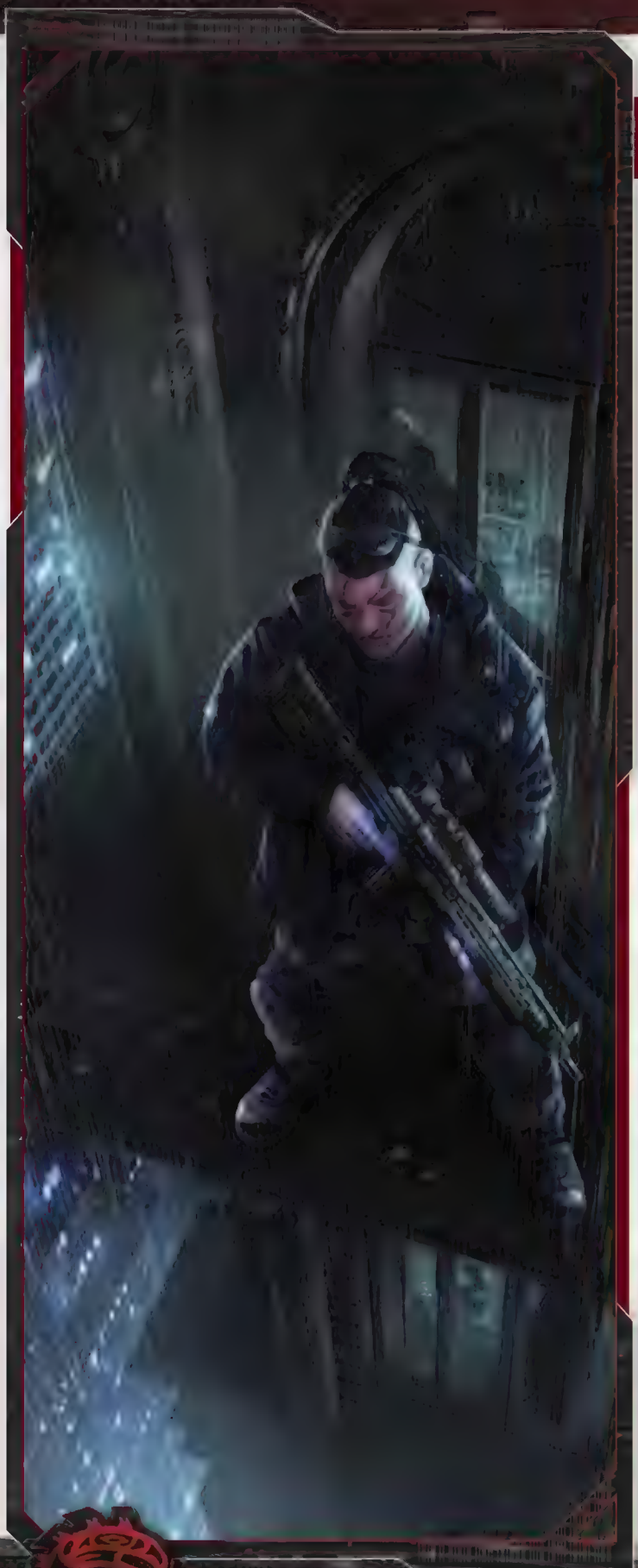
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

Part do-gooder and part glory-hound, the investigative reporter is bound and determined to do whatever it takes, go anywhere to get a story. And while her newly acquired technomancer abilities freaked her out at first, she came to realize they're definitely an advantage. Hey, those data sprites are great for research and data sifting while she concentrates on hitting the shadows to get the full story. But she's not stupid. Without help, she knows she would become just another story in the obits. Sometimes (often) she turns to runners for backup. And sometimes they turn to her—they may need help investigating some slime-ball, be it in person or in the Resonance, or they may need to learn about the power players in a particular neighborhood or corporation. Plus, she can serve as a little extra muscle when needed. She's decent in a fight, but her true talent is talking to and pumping people for info. The truth is out there, but sometimes it just needs the proper leverage to go public.

METATYPE: HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	RES
2	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	6	3	3

Condition Monitor (P/S)	9/10
Armor	12
Limits	Physical 3, Mental 5, Social 5
Physical Initiative	6 + 1D6
Matrix Initiative	6 + 4D6
Skills	Compiling 5, Computer 5, Con 5, Cracking skill group 5, Decompiling 2, Gymnastics 3, Influence skill group 5, Intimidation 5 (Interrogation +2), Perception 5, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 4, Registering 4, Sneaking 3, Software 5, Tracking 3 (Urban +2), Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills	Investigative Reporting 4, Journalism 3, Local Politics 2
Languages	English N, Japanese 3
Qualities	Allergy (uncommon, mild, grass), Analytical Mind, Code of Honor (Seek the Truth), Home Ground (You Know a Guy, home city), Natural Hardening, SINner (national)
Living Persona	Attack 3, Data Processing 3, Device Rating 5, Firewall 3, Sleaze 3
Complex Forms	Puppeteer, Resonance Spike, Resonance Veil
Gear	Area jammer (Rating 5), armor jacket [12], Actioneer Business Clothes [8], binoculars (Capacity 3 w/ image link, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification electric), bug scanner (Rating 5), camera (Capacity 6 w/ audio enhancement 2, image link, vision enhancement 2, vision magnification electronic), 2 certified credsticks (silver), 2 certified credsticks (standard), 2 concealable holsters, contacts (Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision), 10 datachips, DocWagon contract (basic), directional microphone (Capacity 2, w/ audio enhancement 1, select sound filter 1), earbuds (Rating 1), 5 sheets electronic paper, laser microphone (Capacity 2, w/ audio enhancement 1, select sound filter 1), maglock passkey (Rating 5), micro-camera, micro omni-directional microphone, Middle lifestyle (3 months), omni-directional microphone (Capacity 2 w/ audio enhancement 1, select sound filter 1)
Weapons	Browning Ultra-Power [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (6), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 10 (c), w/ 100 rounds regular ammo, 3 spare clips] Cavalier Safeguard [Taser, Acc 5(6), DV 6S(e), AP –5, SA, 6 (m) w/ laser sight, 60 taser darts] Shock hand [Taser, Reach —, DV 9S(e), AP –5]
Contacts	Blogger (Connection 1, Loyalty 2); Fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 2); Screamsheet Editor (Connection 3, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	5,255 + (4D6 x 100)



MARKSMAN ADEPT

Even in an era where ever-advancing technology competes with ancient forces over which is more powerful, there's still a need for someone who can put a bullet through someone's cranium from 1,500 meters away. Combining the best in modern firearms technology, Awakened abilities, and raw skill, the marksman adept is a specialist who lives by the motto "One shot, one kill, no exceptions." For him, big explosions and putting lead downrange fast isn't as important as putting the shot dead on target, usually through the cranium. While many consider him a cold-blooded killer or assassin, he's actually an honorable professional with a select set of skills who prefers precision to brute strength and collateral damage. Whether it's as a designated marksman moving with a team providing long-range precise fire support or in the classic sniper role of providing overwatch and taking out key targets ahead of the main force, the marksman adept is a welcome addition to any team and a serious threat to his enemies.

METATYPE: HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG	M
3	6	5(6)	3	4	4	3	3	6	3	6

Condition Monitor (P/S)	10/10
Armor	9
Limits	Physical 5(6), Mental 5, Social 6
Physical Initiative	8(9) + 2D6
Active Skills	Armorer 3, Automatics 4(5), Close Combat skill group 2, Etiquette 2, Gymnastics 3, Longarms 5(6), Perception 5, Pistols 4(5), Running 3, Sneaking 4(5), Survival 3, Tracking 3
Knowledge Skills	Ballistics 3, Firearm History 1, Meditation 2, Mercenary Units 2, Small Unit Tactics 4
Language Skills	Aztlaner Spanish 3, English N
Qualities	Astral Chameleon, Catlike, Code of Honor (Warrior's Code), Emotional Attachment (Crockett EBR)
Adept Powers	Danger Sense 1, Enhanced Accuracy (Automatics), Enhanced Accuracy (Longarms), Enhanced Accuracy (Pistols), Improved Ability (Automatics) 1, Improved Ability (Longarms) 1, Improved Ability (Pistols) 1, Improved Potential (Physical), Improved Reflexes 1, Motion Sense, Stillness 2
Gear	Binoculars, catalyst stick, chameleon suit [9], climbing gear, concealable holster, DocWagon contract (basic), Erika Elite commlink, fake SIN (Rating 3), flashlight (low-light), ghillie suit (forest/jungle), ghillie suit (urban), goggles [Capacity 2 w/ low-light vision, smartlink], grapple gun, license (Awakened individual, professional mercenary) Middle lifestyle (1 month), periscope, rappelling gloves, stealth rope (100m), subvocal microphone, survival kit, tool kit (Armorer)
Weapons	AK-97 [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(7), DV 10P, AP –2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 38 (c), w/ foregrip, sling, 150 rounds regular ammo, smartgun system (external), 3 spare clips] Cavalier Arms Crockett EBR [Sniper Rifle, Acc 6 (8), DV 12P, AP –5, SA/BF, RC 3, 20 (c), w/ 80 rounds APDS ammo, bipod, imaging scope, 100 rounds regular ammo, shock pad, smartgun system (external), 3 spare clips, 20 stealth tag tracker ammo] Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, Acc 6(9), DV 7P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 14 (c), w/ laser sight, 150 rounds regular ammo, silencer/suppressor, 3 spare clips] Franchi Spas-24 [Shotgun, Acc 4(6), DV 12P, AP –1, SA/BF, RC 1, 15 (c), w/ 50 flechette rounds, 30 gel rounds, shock pad, smartgun system (internal), 100 rounds regular ammo (slug)] Survival knife [Blade, Acc 5, DV (STR+2)P, Reach —, AP –1]
Contacts	Fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 2); Mercenary NCO (Connection 2, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	3,885 + (4D6 X 100)

ROCKER

Some people have a fever, and the only prescription is ... shadowrunning. Artists sometimes find their muses in the most unlikely of places. In the case of the rocker, he found his inspiration in the shadows. Unable to decide between the world of music and shadowrunning, the rocker lives a dangerous dual life and draws inspiration from his experiences in the high-stakes, live-or-die world of the shadows. He composes everything from mournful ballads dedicated to fallen teammates to hyper-charged power-anthems about rebellion, anarchy, and true freedom. Whether it's riffing on his prized guitar at a concert or laying down suppression fire with his assault rifle, the rocker is all about living in the moment, since tomorrow, we may all die. Some in the biz see the rocker as excess baggage at best or a liability at worse, but in a fight he can more than hold his own. And his force of will and rock-star charisma and bad-boy charms are potent weapons in their own right. But no matter what the situation is, the rocker will be in the forefront putting it all on the line because one never really knows where the next bit of inspiration will come from.

METATYPE: HUMAN

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
4	4	4(6)	3	3	3	5	6	3.9	5

Condition Monitor (P/S)	10(11)/10
Armor	12
Limits	Physical 5(6), Mental 5, Social 7
Physical Initiative	9 (11) + 1D6
Active Skills	Artisan 4 (Songwriter +2), Automatics 3, Blades 2, Con 3, Etiquette 3, Leadership 2, Negotiation 4, Perception 4, Performance 6, Pistols 5, Stealth skill group 5, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills	Dive Bars 3, Groupies 1, Music 4, Music Venues 2
Languages	English N, French 2, German 2, Japanese 2, Spanish 2
Qualities	Addiction (Mild, shadowrunning), Distinctive Style (Rock and Roll!!!!), Indomitable (Social) 1, Too Pretty to Hit, SINner (National)
Augmentations	Cyberarm (obvious) [w/ shock hand, Agility 4, Strength 4], cyberears [Rating 3, w/ audio enhancement 1, dampener, select sound filter, sound link, spatial recognizer], datajack, reaction enhancer 2
Gear	Armor jacket [12], 2 certified credsticks (silver), 2 concealable holsters, DocWagon contract (Gold, 1 year), ear buds [Capacity 1, w/ select sound filter 1], Fender-Hall Pegasus electric guitar, glasses [Capacity 3, w/ flare compensation, low-light vision], Hermes Ikon commlink, Low lifestyle (3 months), sub-vocal microphone, tool kit (Disguise)
Weapons	Browning Ultra-Power [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (6), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 10 (c), w/ laser sight, 40 rounds regular ammo, 3 spare clips] Cavalier Safeguard [Taser, Acc 5(6), DV 6S(e), AP –5, SA, 6 (m) w/ laser sight, 12 taser darts] FN HAR [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(6), DV 10P, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 35 (c) w/ laser sight, 200 rounds regular ammo, sling, 3 spare clips] Combat knife [Blade, Acc 6, Reach —, DV (STR +2)P, AP 3)] Shock hand [Taser, Reach —, DV 9S(e), AP –5]
Contacts	Retired Street Samurai (Connection 3, Loyalty 4); Club Owner (Connection 4, Loyalty 3); Fixer (Connection 3, Loyalty 4); Street Performer (Connection 2, Loyalty 3); Studio Musician (Connection 2, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	6,360 + (3D6 + 60)

STREET RACER

She got her start on the amateur racing circuit, showing off her skills with a bike, maneuvering in ways no one else could. People started betting on her, so she started betting on herself, and a fun hobby turned into a source of income. She moved her way up to the semi-professional circuit, loving the adrenaline rush but wishing for something more, something that would put her even more on the edge. She found it in the shadows. Shadowrunners place high value on someone who can get out of a tight spot, and that's the street racer's specialty. She will outrace anything, anytime, anywhere. She's foolish enough to believe she might be able to outrace a bullet, and skilled enough to maybe have a chance at pulling it off.

METATYPE: ELF

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
2	3	4(6)	2	3	4(6)	3	3	1.5	4

Condition Monitor (P/S)	10/10
Armor	16
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 4
Physical Initiative	7(9) + 1D6
Matrix Initiative (AR/Cold sim)	8 + 3D6/8 + 4D6
Skills	Automatics 4, Automotive Mechanic 5, Electronic Warfare 4, Electronics Group 5, Gunnery 5(6), Navigation 3, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 6, Pistols 5, Sneaking 3
Knowledge Skills	Drift Racing 2, Go Gangs 3, Police Procedures 3, Underground Racing Circuits 3
Languages	English N, Japanese 3
Qualities	Addiction (Moderate, caffeine), Dependents 1 (sibling), Distinctive Style (speed-freak), Gearhead, Jury-rigger, Prejudiced (Specific, outspoken, Law Enforcement)
Augmentations	Cerebral booster (Rating 2), control rig (Rating 2), cybereyes [Rating 2, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink], datajack, dermal plating (Rating 2), reaction enhancers (Rating 2), reflex recorder (Gunnery), rigger command console (CompuForce TaskMaster)
Gear	Ares PED Mark III (w/ oxygen tank), bike racing armor [12] (w/ fire resistance 2), bike racing armor helmet [+2], certified credstick (gold), concealable holster, DocWagon contract (basic), facility (automotive mechanic), fake licenses [Rating 5, driving], fake SIN [Rating 5], Hermes Ikon commlink (DR 5) Middle lifestyle (4 months), medkit (Rating 4, w/ 2 supply refills) miniwelder, 3 stim patches, subvocal microphone, sunglasses [Capacity 2, w/ vision enhancement 2] tag eraser, toolkit (automotive mechanic), 3 trauma patches
Vehicles	Ford Americar [Handling 4/3, Speed 3, Accel 2, Body 11, Armor 6, Pilot 1, Sensor 2, Passenger 4, rigger interface, weapon mount (Uzi IV)]; Colt TZ-120 [SMG, Acc 4(6), DV 7P, AP-, SA/BF, RC 2, 40 (c), w/ smartgun system (external), 300 rounds regular ammo] GMC Bulldog Step-Van [Handling 3/3, Speed 3, Accel 1, Body 16, Armor 12, Pilot 1, Sensor 2, Passenger 6, rigger interface, 2 weapon mount (Ingram Valiant)], Ingram Valiant [LMG, Acc 5(7), DV 9P, AP-2, BF/FA, RC 2(3), 100 (belt), w/ smartgun system (external), 300 rounds regular ammo] Suzuki Mirage [Handling 5/3, Speed 6, Accel 3, Body 5, Armor 6, Pilot 1, Sensor 2, Passenger 1, rigger interface, weapon mount (Uzi IV)]; Uzi IV [SMG, Acc 4(6), DV 7P, AP-, BF, RC 1, 24 (c), w/ smartgun system (external), 300 rounds regular ammo] Yamaha Growler [Handling 4/5, Speed 3/4, Accel 1, Body 5, Armor 5, Pilot 1, Sensor 1, Passenger 1]
Weapons	Ares Predator V [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5 (7), DV 8P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 15 (c), w/ 150 rounds regular ammo] Ingram Smartgun X [SMG, Acc 4(6), DV 8P, AP —, BF/FA, RC 2, 32 (c), w/ 150 rounds regular ammo]
Contacts	Fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 2); Go Ganger (Connection 2, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	4,360 + (4D6 x 100)

UNDERCOVER COP

It takes a special kind of con artist to infiltrate the Sixth World's most dangerous gangs, criminal organizations, and shadows. But the undercover cop is up to it (or so she hopes). The moment they go under, the undercover cop's past is gone. Their cover becomes their life. With their handler being their only connection to their real identity, the cop must walk a fine line between obeying and breaking the law in an effort to bring criminals to justice, all while keeping their cover intact. Many undercover cops don't live past their first few months, and very few live to see retirement. Everyone who goes under is changed. Some give in to the corruption they see, while others become jaded and self-destructive. But a rare few learn to use both law and the shadows to bring a little justice to the world ... even if they get their hands a bit dirty in the process.

METATYPE: ORK

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	EDG
5	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5.25	1

Condition Monitor (P/S)	11/10
Armor	12
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 7
Physical Initiative	8 + 1D6
Active Skills	Close Combat skill group 5, Con 6, Escape Artist 3, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Gymnastics 3, Intimidation 4, Longarms 3, Negotiation 4, Perception 4, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 5, Running 2, Stealth skill group 5, Tracking 5 (Urban +2)
Knowledge Skills	Black Markets 2, Criminal Operations 2, Gangs 3, Law Enforcement 2, Organized Crime 3
Language Skills	Chinese 2, English N, Italian N, Japanese 3, Russian 2
Qualities	Allergy (Uncommon, Mild, dogs), Bilingual, Home Ground (Street Politics), SINner (Corporate Limited), Tough as Nails
Augmentations	Cyberears [Rating 2 w/ audio enhancement 1, select sound filter 1, soundlink], cyberhand [Rating 2, Agility 4, Strength 4, w/ hand razors], datajack, image link
Gear	Armor jacket [12], certified credstick (silver), 3 concealable holsters, fake SIN [Rating 3], Low lifestyle (1 month), 10 plastic restraints, 10 sensor tags, 10 stealth tags, Renraku Sensei commlink
Weapons	Colt America L36 [Light Pistol, Acc 7(8), DV 7P, AP —, SA, RC —, 11 (c), w/ 55 gel rounds, laser sight (external), 3 spare clips] Defiance EX Shocker [Taser, Acc 4, DV 9S(e), AP –5, SS, RC 3, 4 (m), w/ 20 spare darts] Remington 990 [Shotgun, Acc 4(5), DV 11P, AP –1, SA, RC —, 8(c), w/ 40 flechette rounds, 40 gel rounds, laser sight, 40 rounds regular ammo (slug)] Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(9), DV 9P, AP –2, SS, RC —, 6 (cy), w/ laser sight, 60 rounds, 3 speed loaders] Hand razors [Blade, Acc 6, Reach —, DV (Str+1)P, AP –3] Knife [Blade, Acc 5, Reach —, DV (STR+1)P, AP –1]
Contacts	Bartender (Connection 2, Loyalty 2); Black Market Dealer (Connection 3, Loyalty 3); BTL Dealer (Connection 2, Loyalty 2); Fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 1); Handler (Connection 3, Loyalty 2); Mafia Capo (Connection 2, Loyalty 3); Street Hustler/Face (Connection 4, Loyalty 3)
Starting ¥	4,547 + (3D6 X 60)

DOMESTICALLY DISTURBED

Netcat reclined into her luxuriously wonderful WCG Bèibù ànmó massage chair, which had been designed specifically for people with long-term pain due to the various ways life had to hurt a person. Included with the chair was an aftermarket Senpaitek Kangofu medkit with vitals monitoring and a self-changing IV abilities, the best friend a decker or technomancer could have when delving deep into the Matrix and beyond for days at a time. The biggest drawback was the catheter, but it there really was no way around using it if you wanted to get things done properly. Today, though, was not a deep dive type of day, and so the catheter was not needed. She mentally called up a data sprite that she had registered to monitor news feeds, blogs, forums, and even a few shadow sites for information that would be of interest to her, and organize it all for her in terms of priority. It was a cute little thing, shaped like a little stick of ancient RAM with an analog reel-to-reel tape-drive face, and it chirped happily as it transferred its report.

The smallest file was flagged for immediate attention, so Netcat gave it a quick once over. Then she slowed down and looked again, her eyes widening, her mouth dropping. She twisted in her chair, which reformed completely around her body and went back to massaging the exhaustion and tension out of her back and shoulders. The file was simple text, no voice feed included, and it carried codes in the title that were only found in fan-fiction. She was appalled, but that didn't keep her from reading it a third time so she could confirm that she was really reading what she thought she was.

Netcat held the toaster to her naked bosom, his perky elven brown nipples stiffening against the hard, cold plasteel of the case. She cooed lightly to it, like one would do when cuddling a lover that meant much, much more than some random one-night stand in a heartless world. It was the sound you make to a soulmate.

"This is wrong." The toaster transmitted to her, "You are a metahuman, while I am just a lowly appliance, built to roast

BY RAYMOND CROTEAU

bread with heating coils. I lack even a heart to properly return the love you have for me."

Netcat lowered her head, kissing the crossbar that separated the slots for the slices of bread. "If this is wrong, then I wish never to be right again." The curvy and naked elf declared to God and anyone else that was listening in on a proclamation of true love, and lowered her kiss so that her tongue

Rage filled the Netcat's mind. *The worse a joke is, the longer it lives,* she thought. The term of casual disparagement for technomancers had never made much sense, yet here was some idiot bringing it to literal, hideous life. She was suddenly angry at a lot of people, but only one of them was near enough to be on the receiving end of her wrath. She stalked around the home, seething as she thought about the methods of revenge for his many, many flaws and thoughtless actions. Her mind filled with images of castration, dismemberment, slow starvation, removal of cybernetics with crude tools, destruction of his online reputation, and, finally, before she left the police to have what was left, forcing him to watch as she burned down his ever-so-holy Safeco Field baseball stadium...

"*Fred*!" Netcat screamed, her tone deeply soaked in venom. Her sprite dashed away in fright, while her cat stopped sharpening his claws on one of the pieces of electronic detritus that cluttered the home, specifically an old Fuchi Gateway 4217-G system that was the only access the home had to the Matrix. Heavily updated over the years, it housed Netcat's sprites, some very nasty interface countermeasures, a few pieces of fake data for clever skript kiddies to think they got some real paydata, and a piece of old rug on the case for Ogmios, the Bastet E-Cat.

"Can't talk, sugarfingers. Baseball," Slamm-0! replied from the living room, lying back on the couch with his son in his lap. Both of them were intently watching the trid of the live Mariners game. The Sony Prismtron wasn't the best model on the market, and certainly not the most expensive, but its standard multi-display

mode gave multiple different smaller views from the various hardwired microcameras around the neighborhood, hair-thin fiberoptic cables connected them to the home, strung there by microdrone crawlers to keep the neighbors from knowing anything about what had been installed around them.

Netcat stormed into the room, paused the game, and stared at the father of her child, "This is important, Slamm-0! Especially as I figure you're responsible for this!" She flipped the AR window of horrible fiction directly into his face.

"Responsible for what?" He took a look at the ARO. His eyes widened slightly, then the corners of his mouth twitched into a smile. Netcat saw the expression, saw him trying to hide it, and considered how painful his death should be.

"I'm not sure this is the kind of thing we should be talking about in front of a baby," Slamm-0! said after a moment while he shielded the boy's eyes with his hands. The little guy was not pleased with that turn of events. He twisted, trying to see past his father's hands, and called out "Bhawl!" He squirmed out of Slamm-0!'s arms and down onto the floor, then ran to the paused trid display and tried to catch the 3D baseball from the pirated broadcast, making the image waver in a manner that he found hilarious. He fell to the ground in giggles.

"He doesn't have his GIAssRz on, so he can't see this piece of horrible purple prose. Now, seeing as you are one of the many people who has occasionally called my people 'toaster lovers'"—she held up a hand to forestall his inevitable interruption—"even if it was only in jest, and also seeing as how you have been known to was rhapsodic about various parts of my anatomy on the Matrix, I want you to know that I find you at least partially responsible for this piece of literary drek." Netcat said, standing firm at preventing Slamm-0! from wiggling out of the argument.

Slamm-0! sighed, and skimmed through the ARO, "This, this is miserable. Horrible. Completely sickening. And here," he said as he flipped the window around for Netcat to see the section he was indicating, "proof. I'd have called your nipples 'dark chocolate' instead of just brown, and ..."

"Fred!" Netcat snapped, looking at their son as he started to play with his favorite toy, the box that had contained their new KitchenAid KCM6200OB kafmaker. The device had arrived in the house less than a month ago but had quickly become perhaps the most important item in the house, as it ensured everyone in the household survived every day with two hackers and a hyperactive child in residence by supplying the parents with life-sustaining soykaf.

Slamm-0! quickly swiveled the window around again, trying to diffuse the situation, "Oh, come on, it's not like the little guy is unfamiliar with your breasts. They've supplied plenty of meals." She knew he was trying to calm her down, but she had no desire to let him, or anyone else in the universe, off the hook just yet. She glared at him, and he fumbled on. "Anyhow, here, here, and here are further pieces of proof. I could have written something better than this when I was 12, and here, um, oh. OW!"

Netcat spun the ARO toward her, scanned ahead, then, winced when she got to the part that he had found. "That's horrible. Aand not physically possible. And even if it was, the woman would end up scarred, electrocuted, or both." She finally closed the window, "All right, the person who wrote this doesn't know anything about female anatomy. You, on the other hand, know *next* to nothing. So the person who wrote it is even more clueless than you."

Slamm-0!'s mouth attempted to come up with a reply, but he was interrupted when the whole house sent off a high alert, bathing the area in a virtual red light in the augmented reality of the room, including a warning image.

"Minions: Assist Me!" it read. Both adults turned to the source and saw that Ogmios was being hugged and held by the little elven monster they had made.

"Kitty!" he said.

"Meow," the cat pleaded, plainly trying to get some help.

The couple moved their hands absently to deactivate the alarm, and sighed in unison. Netcat though for the hundredth time about limiting Ogmios' access to the household network. Then, as she always did, she discarded the thought when she considered what kind of retaliation the e-cat would take..

"Okay, here is what we're going to do. You have some of your little sprite buddies sneak around and find every copy of that file on the Matrix and nuke it from orbit. I'll work up a few agents and have them sneak into the systems where it was posted, and a few other places where it might be placed. They'll ID anyone who posted it, track the IDs, and we'll see if we can follow that back to a master source, rather than a bunch of people just sharing something they think is funny." He raised his hands quickly before she could say anything. "Which it's not! At all! Then we'll go out and demonstrate why you don't do horrible work like this with some hammers and tongs. It'll be like a second honeymoon." Slamm-0! Cautiously reached out toward Netcat. She kept her glare going but did not move away.

"We never had a first honeymoon," she said, then let out a huge breath, "Fine. I really hope that no one tries to seek this out further, as the Matrix Never Forgets. We better hurry and get this done or else it's going to keep spreading."

"But, baseball," he pleaded, "It's part of our son's upbringing."

"Let me put it this way. If anyone else finds out that this is out there, I will ensure you never have a second child again. With me or anyone else. I mean, imagine—imagine!—if Clockwork ever got a hold of this! I could never go to JackPoint again! Unless I killed him." She paused. "Maybe I should just kill him."

"Hey, hey, hey, easy now. We have a plan, let's do it, and not kill anyone. Not today." Slamm-0! looked down at the baby. "That's right! Because Mommy and Daddy don't go killing people just because we're mad! No we don't! And you won't either!" Then he turned back to Netcat. "But if you're in a hurry, let's get to work." The baby was put down for a nap, the cat was given a peaceful spot where he could be undisturbed, and Netcat and Slamm-0! went to work.

Slamm-0! parked himself inside his nest of gear. He didn't need to—he could do what he needed to from any spot in the house—but he always said he felt faster when he was right next to gleaming plastic-and-metal towers. Even if he wasn't going to see the devices for more than the few seconds it took to sit in his chair, it comforted him, and any psychological edge you got when hacking was a good thing.

Which explained some of the things Netcat did once she dove into the streams of data that always flowed around her. She got her sprites on the job, searching for any variations of the text they might find, including misspelling-laden ones meant to throw her off the trail, sending them plunging into the streams and darting through the Matrix. In the meantime she reached into a separate stream, pulled out an ARO, and made a quick delivery order from the Stuffer Shack down the street. Soykaf was great, but quality hacking couldn't be done on liquid alone. She needed Womp-Snappers and Zap-corn to be truly effective. It was automatic on her part, she didn't even have to see the snacks. Every few minutes while she was hacking, her right arm would drift forward, reach for where a snack bowl should be, then move to her mouth, hopefully holding something with very little nutritional value. If her hand came back empty (as was often the case when she hackies out in the field and couldn't set things up exactly as she'd want), she would continue hacking and would, of course, be devastatingly effective, but she always felt sadder and wearier when it was done. Did snacks make her hack better? Maybe, or maybe not, but they *felt* like they did, and that was enough.

Drone delivery from Stuffer Shack is a luxury that people of Netcat's economic profile do not frequently indulge in, but most people of Netcat's economic profile don't have her hacking skills. She'd given herself a Stuffer Shack Preferred Gold account years ago. For her, drone delivery was free. And while she had no qualms about getting such a perk from the corporation with no charge, the personal moral code she'd developed over the years told her she could get herself certain services for free, but goods had to be paid for. So the snacks currently winging their way to her were paid for with honest-to-Ghost nuyen.

She was in the zone, making sure files were deleted while recording user names, looking into their posting history, developing theories about who might know her and have a personal grudge against her and who was just screwing around, so she was not about to get up and bother with the slow-moving, dully illuminated meat world, even when snacks were at stake. No sooner were the snacks dropped at her door than another drone was crawling through the pet flap in the wall next to the door. It scooped up the snacks, carried them inside, tore them open, and dropped them into the bowl placed at exactly the right spot so that the next time Netcat's hand unconsciously reached out, sugary goodness was there to meet it. This was one of a half-dozen useful household tasks the drone performed, including vacuuming. It was a thank-you gift from Turbo Bunny for help on hacking into a BTL studio in Singapore. Talented friends were good to have.

The snacks arrived on the table, went in her mouth, and the hacking went as it should. To her relief, it was pretty much amateurs out there. She didn't find the fingerprints of any personal enemies on this thing. It was just people on the Matrix being stupid, an altogether common occurrence. It allowed Slamm-0! to be absolutely ruthless, banning accounts when he felt like it, or screwing around with people's 'ware because he could, and because they needed to know there were certain people with whom you should not mess.

It was a nice lark, and then it was done. Slamm-0! returned to his son and baseball game while lounging on his Colt CouchSafe, fingering the combination lock that protected the collection of loaded shotguns, assault rifles, and a pair of sound-baffling ear protectors to keep his son and wife from losing their hearing due to the noise of firearms discharging inside a soundproofed building.

"Mad?" his son asked, jerking his little head into the other room, obviously indicating his mother.

"Yeah, little guy, but not at us. Or me. For once. Of course, you do realize whose job it is to cheer her up? After baseball, of course." Slamm-0! replied.

"Jack!"

"That's right, son." The elder hacker said while brushing his son's hair, "You'll have to cheer her up as always. And you always do." He said, turning the recorded baseball game back on while they both sat entranced by the spectacle of sport.

WHO YOU KNOW

A gunshot wakes Deedel from his light sleep. He turns over too quickly and disturbs the stack of trashcans that conceals his squatter's residence. A few cans tumble, casting a cacophony of trash out into the alley. In response was the report of another gunshot followed by retreating footsteps. Deedel cautiously crawls out into the alley. Seeing no movement, he ventures further. Near the front of the alley, he sees a body. Normally this would be a traumatic event for a young child, but Deedel has been living in the Barrens for all twelve years of his life. He approaches until he can see the face. Underneath the bruises, Deedel recognizes the tusks and jawline of the one called the CEO. The body groans. "Hey! Cee-Oh, don't geek it," Deedel whispers. "I'll get help."

Deedel runs through the gaps between buildings, heading toward Spider territory. Finally seeing a web tag within the graffiti, he looks for any gangers hanging around.

"Hello morsel. What brings you this far into the web? There's a toll for traveling through here, you know." The voice from the shadows above comes from a troll dressed in black leather, lounging in a makeshift hammock high in the rubble of a building. As the troll rappels down to the ground, Deedel recognizes him as Ten Fang, someone he knows has done business with the CEO.

"Ten Fang, the Cee-Oh is bleeding out in the alley off Sixth Street. He needs help."

Taken aback that this kid knows his name and who the CEO is, Ten Fang gives up the intimidation act, then shakes a few cables to get a duffle bag to drop down to him. "Show me."

Running quickly back to the alley where he slept, Deedel finds that the CEO has not moved but is still breathing. Ten Fang rolls the CEO over. CEO's hand feebly contains the blood from the bullet wound. Opening the duffle bag, Ten Fang pulls out a worn medkit. Placing it on the CEO, Ten Fang starts applying pads, attaching trodes, and inserting needles as instructed by the medkit. After a few moments, OrkCEO opens his eyes and sees the worried looks on Deedel and Ten Fang.

"You'll live, old man," grumbles Ten Fang, "Can't have my meal ticket become ghoul chow."

OrkCEO reaches out to Deedel. "Thanks, kid, I owe you one."

INTRODUCTION

No man is an island. Some may claim they are a lone wolf, but there are always people in the background—like the guy supplying the weapons or the doc patching up wounds—who support this individual in his supposedly solo adventures. In the business of shadowrunning, there is a certain risk in trusting someone else. It's not just the money, but do you have faith that they gave you the correct information? Do you have faith that you'll wake up when you go under the knife? At the same time, getting too close to a contact can lead to liabilities and weaknesses that can be leveraged against you. What sort of people do you have in your little black book besides a fixer? Maybe you have the number of a redheaded S-K admin waiting for your call. Maybe you know an arms dealer who fences guns on the side. Maybe your roommate is good enough to give you a lift anywhere in Seattle, including braving the Barrens. Here we'll further expand on the details of what a contact is, what they want, and more. These rules can build more detailed and layered relationships between characters and their contacts.

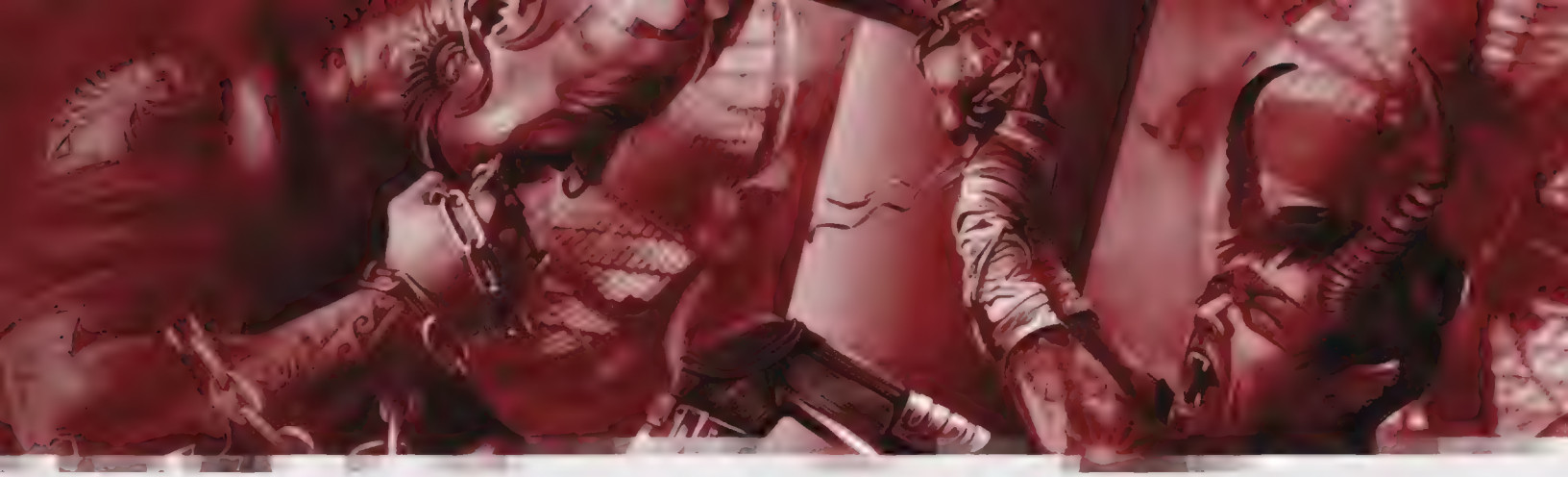
BREAKDOWN OF CONTACT TYPES

What can a contact do for you? There are six types of services/support that a contact can provide. Contacts may perform multiple services, but there is usually one type of service or support that is their specialty. For example, a fixer's primary job is networking, specifically connecting the employee with the employer, but they may also have uses in legwork or swag. If a player wants to use a contact for a secondary purpose, then it's considered a favor (p. 389, *SR5*). As a gamemaster rounds out a contact, there maybe some flexibility in the contact's purpose or usefulness to characters.

The six types of services/support are:

LEGWORK

Legwork is chasing down the data trail and answering questions that may not be found on the Matrix (p. 387, *SR5*).



NETWORKING

Networking is all about putting the right people in the same room, getting them to talk, and hopefully launching them on a mutually beneficial relationship (p. 388, *SR5*).

SWAG

You want something, other people have it. With any luck, your contact is one of these other people. You also might be able to sell them some goods you picked up while on the job (p. 388, *SR5*).

SHADOW SERVICES

This is a special kind of favor (p. 388, *SR5*). Contacts who perform this kind of service have a job to do, and they're using their skills on your behalf for a form of payment besides the usual cash.

PERSONAL FAVORS

This also is a special kind of favor (p. 388, *SR5*). These contacts have power, influence, or are in a position of authority. You want them to use that power/influence/authority to bend the rules, turn a blind eye, or whisper in someone's ear a suggestion.

SUPPORT

These contacts may not have power, a job that can be exploited, or money you can borrow, but dammit they've got your back. Some may have some talent, a cool toy that you don't know how to use, or maybe they just have a place for you to crash. More often support contacts are the friends and minor contacts that are not necessarily a big part of the shadowrunner's business, but play a role in the other aspects of his life.

THE COST: WHAT DOES A CONTACT WANT?

Contacts don't do things for you out of the goodness of their hearts. Everything has a price. Payment doesn't have to come in nuyen, but it has to come. Maybe it's favor trading, maybe it's helping the contact satisfy a particular vice, or maybe it's supplying critical data. Each contact has a transaction type they prefer, and if their price isn't met, the character owes the contact (see **I Owe You One**, p. 176). If the price isn't paid in a proper time frame, the contact's going to notice, and there will be consequences. The contact's Loyalty to the character can go down, the character might take a hit to their reputation, or worse (see **Nothing Personal, Just Business**, p. 177).

CASH

For many contacts, the almighty digital nuyen is acceptable, especially in transactions for services and goods. A service fee would of course be added to the price of the item or service depending on the relationship the contact has with the character and the effort to find the item (which is tied to the item's Availability Rating). While the nuyen is standard, not all contacts want that type of currency. The Euro, peso, even the UCAS dollar are requested by the more eccentric or patriotic. Moneychangers are available, though they will take their fee (in nuyen). Another alternative to nuyen is corporate scrip. Corporations don't pay their employees in nuyen, they pay them in scrip to be used in corporate-owned stores for corporate-brand foodstuff and entertainment. Corporate scrip can't be spent outside corporate stores, which limits its utility, but corporate-based contacts may be willing to be paid in this manner as it may lead to fewer questions about where they got the money. A fourth cash option is the hard stuff, actual for-real currency. Not a certified credstick, but bits of plastic, metal, and cloth with a monetary value printed on them. They are still out there, but don't circulate much. There's no nuyen hard currency, but some of the less-developed nations of the world still use bills and coins. This method is favored by those who live in the backwaters where currency is still king, or paranoid types who retain vivid memories of two Matrix crashes and worry about what a glitch might do to their electronic wealth. Hard currency isn't as traceable as a credstick, but it's easier to counterfeit.

SERVICES

More often contacts will offer their support, service, or intel for a character provided that the character in

CASH AND SCRIP

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

All rates expressed in relationship to one nuyen

UCAS dollar bill	2 : 1*
Tir ryal	0.9 : 1*
Southeast Asian ringgit	50 : 1*
Atzlan peso	60 : 1*

CORPORATE SCRIP

Saeder-Krupp	0.8 : 1
Shiawase	1 : 1
MCT	1.01 : 1
Wuxing	3 : 1
Ares	3.5 : 1
Evo	5 : 1
Renraku	10 : 1
Horizon	15 : 1
Aztechnology	20 : 1

** Hard currency available*

turn does a job for them. The services a contact may request can be grouped into the following categories: shadow work, contact-related work, and drek jobs.

Most common is *shadow work*, requesting a job that shadowrunners do best, using the skills they sell on the open market. Clearly the skills have some value, or the character wouldn't be getting any job offers. Contacts might ask for a shadowrunner to assist them in classic shadow work such as sabotaging a competitor's business, stealing paydata, retrieving something stolen from them, or more nobly, helping them get out from under the thumb of a blackmailer, kidnapper, or criminal organization.

Frequently, the contact might have a use for a character's skills in the course of their normal job, so they call runners in for *contact-related work*. Free skilled labor is just as valuable as shadow services, and it has the benefit of being less messy. Or even legal. A street doc contact probably wouldn't ask a street sam to do brain surgery, but could ask him to serve as a courier for medical supplies, or act as security detail at a Barrens medical office. A talismonger contact might send a character to collect some reagents, and a law-enforcement contact may send them to canvass a neighborhood. A middle management contact might engage them in some hot data entry action, though it would likely be best for this not to be the focus on an entire gaming session.

Then there's the occasional off-the-wall *drek job*. There's a cockroach the size of a car spotted in the sewer that needs exterminating, Aunt Alice needs someone to take her to samba lessons, or a contact with kids needs someone to chaperone a high-school prom. These are jobs that the contact doesn't want to deal with, and the character is the perfect person to push it off on. Drek jobs are a catchall for stuff that needs doing but doesn't require a shadowrunner's particular set of skills and doesn't relate to the contact's line of work. What matters is that the contact trusts the character enough to get it done right.

BARTER

There are contacts who do not use a bank or nuyen to keep their electronic footprint at a minimum, so they favor trading for goods, keeping everything off-bank and off-book. These trades can be directly related to the contact's work, like a gun dealer asking for specific guns in exchange for performing repair or modification services, or they can be more wide-ranging. An intelligence source, for example, may trade some juicy information for a pack of real, honest-to-goodness Arabica beans, or a reporter may pass along information about an on-the-rise corp executive in exchange for a shiny new commlink. Sometimes the contacts want the goods they are receiving for themselves, or sometimes they want them because of the value they carry. For example, a prisoner may ask for soy chips or caffeine packets, as those serve as currency substitutes on the inside. In various cities, people craft or grow stuff to trade as they lack a convenient store where they can spend nuyen.

Some contacts are always in need of items relating to their business. Instead of fencing loot, a runner might bring guns to a weapons dealer, medicine to a street doc, or a car to a chop shop as payment for services. Such items, whose worth may change depending on the contact's skill and opinions, work best where precise values of information and services are somewhat ambiguous.

Then you have those big contacts who already seem to have everything. What can a runner get them? Cash might not hold any interest for them, at least not at the level runners are likely to be able to offer. Their heads might, however, be turned by unique, magical, or rare items. How about some Brazilian kiwis? A manuscript retrieved from the belly of a Bavarian castle? Or maybe while you're in Egypt, you could pick up a bottle of Mediterranean Styx from the black market? The Wizard of Oz wouldn't help Dorothy go home until she brought him the witch's broomstick—the powers of the Sixth World may have similarly odd requests that need to be fulfilled before they offer their services, and these requests can form the basis of a side trip or entirely new adventure.

OTHER

There's always a back door to getting help from your contacts. To find it, here are some questions to ask:

CUTTING A DEAL

OPTIONAL QUALITIES FOR BARTER GOODS

Bartering goods involves a bit of guesswork when it comes to the perceived value of what items would be worth trading. (What is it worth to the contact beyond the price in the catalog?) The gamemaster can add these optional qualities to help quantify the worth of certain items.

PROVENANCE

There is recorded evidence tying the item to a famous person or event. Double the value of items tied to recent events and living people. Triple the value of items for more historical events and deceased people.

VINTAGE

There are some advantages to age. For every decade of the item's age, add one percent to its value, up to a maximum of ten percent (for century-old items).

MASTER CRAFTED

Most items are machine-cut and mass-produced with the cheapest materials. Master Crafted items took more time to create, include better materials, were inspected for quality, and may even have been assembled by hand. Add twenty percent to the value of the item.

How well do you know them? Are they married? Do they have kids? Hobbies? Vices? Answering these questions can help characters find the right item or offer to unlock the contact's services. If the contact is a family man, the character may trade a trip to virtual Disneyland in exchange for a big favor. The risk of doing this is, if you play off the contact's vice, he may become less effective. How helpful will a contact be if they succumb further into their addiction that you've been feeding? Will the favor be worth it, knowing that the contact could be compromised in multiple ways once the payment is made? If an addiction is supplied, the gamemaster should check on a contact's addiction (p. 414, *SR5*) to see if he further succumbs to it.

I OWE YOU ONE (GAINING CHIPS)

Say your character is in the middle of some job and you need help from a contact, but don't have the cash to pay her. If the relationship is close enough, the character might get away with a simple promise: "I owe you one." So what does this mean? It means that the character can work to pay the contact in cash for the service in some agreed-upon time period, or they could satisfy their debt through offering a favor. The tracking of who owes what to whom is done through a system of "chips." If the character successfully requests a favor from a contact (p. 389, *SR5*), the contact gains chips with the character equal to the Rating of the favor. When the character makes some sort of attempt at repaying the contact for the favor, the contact should generally demand twice the value of the favor in payment; that is, if the contact did a Rating 2 favor, the character should have to perform two Rating 2 favors in return, or one Rating 4 favor. An agreed-upon cash payment, based on approximately twice the market value of the original favor, can also be accepted as payment. Payment with valuable goods can be used in place of cash if the contact is amenable.

When a character owes a chip to a contact, that contact can cash in that chip or several chips to gain a favor from the character, possibly pro-bono side missions that drag the other characters in as well. If the character decides not to honor the favor, the relationship between the character and contact can degrade, possibly reducing the Loyalty of the contact (especially if the initial favor was Rating 3 or higher).

In the reverse, sometimes the character can do some good work for a contact, but the character doesn't want anything at this point (or the contact doesn't have anything to give to the character). Or the contact requests a favor of the character and the character completes it. This is considered a chip for the character. These chips have a relatively long shelf life, and the character can collect them from any contact. So what can a character do with them?

IMPROVE RELATIONSHIP

While the gamemaster is free to roleplay how the character can improve a relationship with a contact, a factor in this could be chips that the character and contact may owe each other. The character can spend chips and time in weeks to improve the relationship up one level. The cost is equal to the loyalty level the character is trying to achieve. So going from *Just Biz* (Rating 1) to *Regular* (Rating 2) would cost two chips and two weeks of downtime relating to interaction with the contact. This may get pretty lengthy and expensive in moving from *Got Your Back* (Rating 5) to *Buddy For Life* (Rating 6), so if the character wishes to do so, the gamemaster might wish to incorporate some of the time and challenge into an adventure. If the characters are able to complete work that brings significant benefits to the contact, the gamemaster may improve both the Connection rating and the Loyalty of the contact as well at the end of the adventure.

FUTURE SERVICE

A character who is low on funds, needs help from a contact, and has some chips from them can spend chips to pay for services. The gamemaster determines just how many chips are needed to pay for what the characters want.

FAVORS

A character's chips can also be used to get favors from a contact. Favors (p. 389, *SR5*) can be service other than those the contact normally offers, but the action must be within the contact's abilities as decided by the gamemaster. Each chip spent adds one die to the Negotiation Test to gain the favor, up to a maximum bonus of +4. If successful, the contact gains chips equal to the Rating of the favor, minus any remaining chips the character has with the contact. If the character has a lot of outstanding chips, the favor may only partially reduce their debt.

GROUP OR ORGANIZATION CONTACT OPTIONS

Maybe a character owes loyalty to a gang they were part of before they started running. Maybe she's an ex-soldier from a mercenary organization, or a former corp drone. Maybe he still secretly works for Lone Star or is an investigative reporter for KSAF looking for the inside scoop. In these cases and more, a character might have a contact that is an entire organization, rather than a single individual.

An organization is different from a single contact within the organization. It is faceless, so it cannot do the character any favors, nor can you gain or owe chips to the organization. Loyalty is limited to 1, and the charac-

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

ORGANIZATION	CONNECTION BONUS	KARMA COST	SINNER QUALITY REQUIRED?
Street Gang	1	5	N
City Government	1	3	Y
Humanis Policlub	2	10	N
Order of St. Sylvester	2	8	Y
Lone Star/GOD	3	12	Y

I KNOW A GUY

People come and go in a character's life; there are people encountered at parties and conventions, ex-army buddies, neighbors with unusual hobbies, and so on. After a while in your travels, you'll know a few people, but not well enough to be contacts, or maybe they are people who could have been contacts if you'd gotten to know them better, or people who still would be a contact if circumstances were different. Take, for example, Han Solo and Lando Calrissian from *Star Wars* or Indiana Jones and Marion Ravenwood from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. With the gamemaster's permission, "I Know a Guy" allows the player to use Edge in pulling a contact from the character's past. It's expensive; players must spend Edge points equal to twice the desired Connection Rating of the contact. The resulting contact's Loyalty starts at 1, although the gamemaster may change the Loyalty of the contact to suit the background and storyline of the adventure. The Edge spent on this contact does not refresh until the next point that the character earns Karma. After the mission/adventure, the character can spend the normal amount of Karma to add the new contact permanently. If that Karma is not spent, the individual fades back into the character's past until they use Edge once more to summon them forth.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

There are some tasks that may be too big for one contact to accomplish, but pooling talent/resources might help them do it together. In this wireless, technological world, a character can get his contacts together through the commlink, sharing face time and information instantaneously. If the gamemaster permits, the character makes a simple Leadership + Charisma [Social] Test, with hits being the limit on the number of contacts a character can manage for this task. The Contacts then can make a teamwork test (p. 49, *SR5*) for completing the task. The cost of social networking for the character is that he has to pay each contact individually for this service, not just their portion of it; that means the price they have to shell out is multiplied by the number of contacts it took to get it.

NOTHING PERSONAL, JUST BUSINESS

Sure, the contact is loyal to the character (according to his starting Loyalty rating), but for how long? And while the relationship from the contact to the character is "buddy," what about the reverse? How do you know the contact? Is he an old army buddy? Is he a victim of the character's blackmail? Is the character just using the contact, toying with her emotions until she is no longer useful? Will the character honor favors requested by the contact or keep things strictly business? These are many questions that the player should think about when creating contacts.

A TEST OF LOYALTY

If a contact is under duress, their loyalty to the character may be tested. Make a Loyalty Test to see whether the contact can resist intimidation, torture, bribes, etc. Roll the character's Intuition + the contact's Loyalty rating, and apply the hits as bonus dice to the usual resistance roll. Other actions done or not done by the character can also lead to Loyalty Tests.

REPAYMENT AMOUNT	TIME FRAME (WEEKS)
Up to 100¥	4
101¥ to 1,000¥	3
1,001¥ to 10,000¥	2
10,001¥ to 100,000¥	1

ter has some contractual obligation to the organization that he should not break, lest he be kicked out of the club (see discussions of strictures on p. 129, *Street Grimoire*, for examples on what some contractual obligations may be). Some organizations also require the character to have a SIN so they can clearly identify the person making the request. Group and organizational contacts are limited to legwork or networking services. The contact provides bonus dice to the character they can use in tests made during legwork or efforts to find help. This represents the character using the nameless/faceless channels within the organization. There is a downside to using this kind of contact, as it leaves a data trail and lets select people in an organization know a little bit about what you are up to.

Selecting and organizational contact is a little different than choosing other contacts. Treat the Karma spent at character creation for an organizational contact as part of the expenditure for positive qualities, making it part of the limit that can be spent on qualities.

NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

How do you define the relationship between your character and his contact? Most of that is determined by the Loyalty rating, but there are some qualities that can be added to refine the relationship.

BLACKMAIL

The character has something that he can hold over the contact to get him to do his business. Loyalty then becomes a measure of how much leverage you have over this contact. Loyalty Tests still apply as normal, but it's not giving up the character the contact is worried about, but having the blackmail exposed. With blackmail, a contact's Loyalty (Leverage) doesn't diminish, nor can a contact leave the character. The character must use intimidation in order to get this contact to do anything for him (see Using Intimidation, below). Favors with a blackmailed contact do not cost the character.

If the contact fails a Loyalty (Leverage) Test it means he doesn't care who knows what he's being blackmailed for. The contact then is not a contact anymore (see Burning Bridges). The character gains a point of Notoriety, and there are now people out for payback (use the Connection Rating to determine the approximate Professional Rating of the people who will be coming after the contact). Any other fallout of the blackmailed information on the contact is up to the gamemaster. Contacts with this quality cost an additional 2 Karma.

FAMILY

Blood is always thicker than water. This is true for having family as contacts. Treat contacts with the family quality as having a Loyalty one higher than their actual Loyalty when performing Loyalty Tests. The character earns 1 less chip than a normal contact when asking favors. Chips spent in improving relationships also cost one less.

On the downside, contacts are less diligent in getting things done for family, since it's work for family. Reduce the Loyalty by 1 in performing their job (p. 387, *SR5*). This includes extra dice, discounts, etc. Buying a contact with this quality costs an additional 1 Karma.

MAINTAINING CONTACT RELATIONS

Contacts are maintained through the usual interaction between character and contact. If the player does not keep up some sort of interaction between character and contact (once every (Loyalty) months), then the gamemaster can make a Loyalty (2) Test to see if the contact has lost interest or given up on the character. If unsuccessful, the contact's Loyalty Rating drops by 1. If the contact's Loyalty drops to 0, the contact may be lost all together. See **Burning Bridges**, p. 179.

PAYING OFF DEBT

As stated previously, chips can be paid off through the contact's preferred method of payment within the acceptable timeframe (p. 176). If a payment is not made within the timeframe, the contact makes a Loyalty Test with a threshold equal to the number of weeks that have passed. If successful, the Loyalty endures and the contact gives the character a break and another week to make a payment. If unsuccessful, the Loyalty to the character is reduced by 1. This test occurs every week until the debt has been paid. If the character turns down a contact's request for a favor that would pay off some debt, a Loyalty Test is made with a threshold of the number of chips that would have cost. This test is made regardless of whether the player wanted to pay off the debt in a different way, as it shows how the character treats his contacts.

USING INTIMIDATION

Would your character threaten/bully a contact to get what he wants? Intimidation can be used with negotiations through a Teamwork Test (p. 49, *SR5*) in order to gain a favor or service from a contact without having to pay for it or fall into debt to the contact with chips. The cost of abusing contacts in this fashion is an immediate reduction of Loyalty by 1 and removal of the player's ability to improve the relationship between the contact and character. Every use of intimidation continues to reduce a contact's Loyalty by 1 until the character burns the bridge between them. The exception to this loyalty reduction is contacts who are being blackmailed.

USING CON/SEDUCTION

Would your character deceive/lie to their contact in order to keep the relationship going? During downtime, an opposed Con (p. 141, *SR5*) Test can be used to maintain the Loyalty of a contact. If successful, the contact's Loyalty remains the same even if the contact had to make a Loyalty Test in the same week. If the character gets more net hits than the current Loyalty of the contact, the contact raises his Loyalty to the contact by 1. Failing this test reduces the contact's Loyalty by 1. This test can be made only once in a downtime period per contact. If the character fails to pay off debt in the appropriate amount of time or does not redeem a favor asked by the contact, any Loyalty Test that fails reduces their Loyalty by 2. The character also earns a point of notoriety for their deception.

WHEN YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU

Characters with enough Street Cred or Notoriety can be known by other runners, contacts, law enforcement, and organized criminals. When a character is recognized, Street Cred becomes a bonus to his Social limit

(p. 368, *SR5*). If the character has more Notoriety than Street Cred, it becomes a hindrance in forming new contact relations. For each 2 points of Notoriety over Street Cred, improving Loyalty costs additional 1 Karma or 2 chips.

BURNING BRIDGES

Contacts whose Loyalty Ratings are reduced to 0 are getting ready to wash their hands of the character. If the player does not invest any time/interest in that contact to fix the relationship, that contact is lost to that character by the start of the next job/adventure. All chips owed by or debited to the contact are erased at this point. The contact becomes part of the character's history (see **I Know a Guy**, p. 177). A blackmailed contact's relationship cannot be fixed.

QUICK CONTACT PERSONALITY GENERATOR

Gamemasters sometimes need to quickly flesh out a contact's personality, service fee, and stats. Contacts can be built as Prime Runners (p. 385, *SR5*), or gamemasters can use the Contact Quickstats sidebar below, rolling D6 for each item. The gamemaster may further change or enhance the contact in order to tie it into players' needs or the campaign/storyline.

DO I KNOW YOU?

This test can be used to see if characters know someone they encounter in the course of a job or if they themselves are recognized. It is a Memory Test (p.152, SR5) with a threshold listed below. The highest of either Notoriety or Street Cred of the subject plus public awareness reduces this threshold. The higher awareness value also determines if the subject is known in a positive or negative context.

DESCRIPTION	THRESHOLD
Runners working in the same city region (Seattle, Denver, etc.)	5
Runners working in the same country (AGS, UCAS, etc.), organized crime/law enforcement in the same city region	7
Runners working on the same continent, organized crime/law enforcement in the same country	9
General public	10*

**Only Public Awareness reduces threshold for the general public*

CONTACT GENDER

ROLL	RESULT
1–3	Male
4–6	Female

CONTACT AGE

ROLL	RESULT
1–2	Young (18-34)
3–4	Middle-Aged (35-55)
5–6	Old (55+)

CONTACT METATYPE PART 1

ROLL	RESULT
1	Human
2	Human
3	Human
4	Human
5	Metahuman (go to Part 2)
6	Metahuman (go to Part 2)

CONTACT METATYPE PART 2

ROLL	RESULT
1	Dwarf
2	Elf
3	Ork
4	Troll
5	Gamemaster's choice
6	Gamemaster's choice

CONTACT QUICKSTATS

STATS

Distribute 18 points among the attributes, starting with the minimum for the contact's metatype and adding from there.

SKILLS

Each point of Connection Rating for the contact changes the amount of points for attributes, skills, and cash, in order to represent the talent and resources the contact has. The gamemaster may adjust this based on the power level of his game.

CONNECTION RATING	BONUS ATTRIBUTE POINTS	TOTAL SKILL POINTS*	NUYEN
1	0	14/0	6,000¥
2	1	18/0	50,000¥
3	2	22/2	140,000¥
4	2	26/4	175,000¥
5	3	26/4	225,000¥
6	3	30/5	250,000¥
7	2	34/5	275,000¥
8	3	34/5	275,000¥
9	3	38/5	300,000¥
10	4	38/5	375,000¥
11	2	42/8	450,000¥
12	3	46/10	500,000¥

* The number after the slash is for special attribute points. These points cannot be used on regular attributes, and regular attribute points cannot be used on special attributes.

CONTACT PREFERRED TYPE OF PAYMENT

ROLL	RESULT
2	Cash (hard currency)
3	Service (drek jobs)
4	Cash (corp scrip)
5	Barter (items needed for the profession)
6	Service (shadowrunner job)
7	Cash (credstick)
8	Cash (credstick)
9	Barter (easy-to-sell items)
10	Service (free-labor jobs)
11	Barter (hobby/vice items)
12	Cash (ECC or other foreign electronic currency)

CONTACT HOBBIES/VICES

ROLL	RESULT
2	Gamemaster's choice
3	Family obligations (children, parents, siblings, etc.)
4	Gambling (cards, horses, etc.)
5	Bad habits (illegal drugs, BTLs)
6	Personal grooming (clothes/fashion, shoes, perfumes, cosmetic treatments)
7	Nothing of interest or of use
8	Social habits (drinking, smoking)
9	Entertainment (trid shows, movies, music)
10	Weapons (guns, blades, military, etc.)
11	Vehicles (cars, drones, etc.)
12	Gamemaster's choice

CONTACT PERSONAL LIFE

ROLL	RESULT
1	Single
2	In relationship
3	Familial relationships
4	Divorced
5	Widowed
6	None of your damn business (very private)

For the more ambitious in fleshing out the contacts, here are examples of random quirks to make them more memorable.

MENTAL QUIRKS

Absent-minded (missing articles of clothing, forgets time of day, calls people by the wrong name)	Illiterate, but won't admit it (most technology has iconic buttons and voice commands, so it's possible to get by without reading)
Believes himself to be an expert in some trivia or knowledge and finds ways to use it	Mistrusts technological devices (paranoid or too old school)
Believes himself to be sexy and flirts constantly	Nervous habits (bites fingernails, wrings hands together, flop sweat, fidgety, etc.)
Chauvinist (male or female)	Obsessive-compulsive habits (arranging stuff on table, ritualistic or repetitious mannerisms)
Compulsive liar	Paranoid habits (insists on sitting with back toward wall, constantly checks sensors linked to commlink, etc.)
Disdain for SINless	Racist toward a specific metatype (gamemaster choice)
Disdain when working with someone from a specific lifestyle (typically Squatter or Luxury)	Suffering from some obvious phobia (agoraphobia, mysophobia, acrophobia, claustrophobia, etc.)
Fear of touching people	Talks to himself (and sometimes answers)
Fear of trolls/orks, but tries not to show it.	Thin skinned
Hates to be corrected	Tightwad (won't pay for dinner, doesn't give discounts, takes the cheapest alternative, etc.)
Hoarder of materials	Unusual food preferences (substitutes soy for krill, crickets, or frogs, drinks only algae-based wine)

VERBAL QUIRKS

Mangles metaphors ("I'm going to hunt you down like a duck")	Speaks with a lisp
Memorable voice (deep, gravelly, light accent, sultry)	Speaks with a thick accent that makes it hard to understand
Over-explains	Sprinkles profanities in every sentence
Speaks too loudly, or mumbles	Talks too much ("I shouldn't have told you that…")

PHYSICAL QUIRKS

Allergic to a team member's perfume/aftershave	Exceptionally soiled (stained clothes, dirty hands, scuffed/sticky devices, etc.)
Bad breath	Facial tick
Chromed or plated features (any cybernetics, teeth, etc.)	Habitually handles some small item on his person (see sympathetic link)
Clothes don't fit (like they were made for another person)	Memorable/unique smell (exotic perfume, incense, etc.)
Constantly sick/death warmed over	Strong odor (BO, aftershave, perfume, smoke, disinfectant, etc.)
Crushing handshake	Two different eye colors
Distinctive facial hair (bicycle handle mustache, braided beard with detonation cord, is a woman, etc.)	Visible scarring (face, hands, etc.)
Distinctive style of clothing	Visible tattoos/inserts
Exceptionally clean/hygienic	Walks with a limp
Exceptionally skinny or overweight	War wounds (lost fingers, cauliflower ear, bullet scars, etc.)

SAMPLE CONTACTS

Below are several contacts that a character might have to deal with, including information about their usual service/support type, Connection Rating, and preferred payment method. Some additional details (metatype, gender, hobbies, and personal life) are suggested, and there is a brief description provided. As with the sample contacts in the core book (p. 390, *SR5*), no armor, equipment, cyberware, or magic is included with these contacts. The gamemaster may freely add those details to fit his campaign/adventure.

ARMS DEALER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 4
Type: Swag
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (hobby/vice items)
Hobbies/Vice: Weapons (military)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	4	5	3	4	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 5
Skills	Armorer 4, Computers 3, Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Firearms 4, Gunnery 3, Instruction 2, Negotiation 5, Perception 4
Knowledge Skills	Chemistry 4, Firearms 4, Mercenary Groups 4
Description	What are you looking for? Better recoil? Armor piercing? Range? How about a chainsaw accessory or a pearl handle with a clamshell holster? The Arms Dealer offers a variety of firearms, from the hold-out pistol to assault cannon along with a rainbow of ammo flavors. The Arms Dealer does business with a number of organizations. Instead of selling to the highest bidder, he makes sure there's plenty to go around. Pricing depends on how much he likes you and what permits you already have. As a favor, he might let you borrow or purchase one of the bigger toys.
Similar Contacts	Military Supply Officer, Terrorist

BARTENDER

Metatype: Elf
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Type: Legwork
Connection Rating: 1
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Entertainment (trid show *Odd Coven*)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business!

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	4	3	3	4	3	4	5	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 7
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Automatics 1, Clubs 3, Etiquette 4 (Street +2), Intimidation 2, Negotiation 3
Knowledge Skills	Alcohol 4, Media Stars 4, Sports 4, Street Rumors 2
Description	(p. 390, *SR5*)
Similar Contacts	Bouncer, Nightclub Owner, Stripper, Waitress

BODYGUARD

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (cigarettes)
Personal Life: In a Relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	4	4	3	2	3	2	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 4, Social 5
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Etiquette 2 (Corporate +2), Leadership 2, Perception 3, Pistols 4, Running 2, Unarmed Combat 4
Description	She has a job to do in protecting someone else's life even if it means taking a bullet for them. She works in the private sector, picking up temp jobs for visiting travelers or acting as extra security during events or private parties. While not in the shadowrunning business, she can always lend a pair of eyes or ears.
Similar Contacts	Bounty Hunter, Rent-a-Cop

BOOKIE

Metatype: Ork
Sex: Male
Age: Old
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Vehicles (antique cars)
Personal Life: Widowed

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
5	4	3	3	4	5	4	7	6	1

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 5
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 3, Con 3, Etiquette 3, Negotiation 4, Perception 5
Knowledge Skills	Currency Exchange Rates 3, Gambling Sites 6, Horse Breeds 3, Sport Statistics 6
Description	May the odds be ever in your favor—that's what he says every time you place a bet. His comment is not, of course, sincere. He's good at knowing the odds in the various games of sport across the grids and balancing them so whatever the matchup, he'll get money put down on either side. He is also good at knowing the statistics of the sports players and who's open for other games of chance (pool, darts, etc.). You can borrow money from him, but expect substantial interest to be added.
Similar Contacts	Loan Shark

BORDER PATROL AGENT

Metatype: Troll
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Service (free-labor jobs)
Hobbies/Vice: Gambling (cards)
Personal Life: Family Man

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
8	3	5	5	3	3	5	3	6	1

Condition Monitor	12/10
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	10 + 1D6
Skills	Intimidation 3, Longarms 3 (Long-Range Shots +2), Perception 5, Survival 2, Tracking 4
Knowledge Skills	Botany 3 (Edible Wild Plants +2), Border Security 5, Geology 3 (Terrain +2), Language (whatever is spoken across any nearby border) 4
Description	Every nation hires officers to keep the riffraff from other countries from commingling with their own riffraff. A Border Patrol Agent has access to scanned SINs and checks on their authenticity. They are also physically on duty watching the borders. Border Patrol Agents can do this by horse, car, boat, or with drones watching the skies above. Besides the intel on who's who moving in or out of a nation, he could also do the character a favor by helping him cross the very border he's supposed to be guarding.
Similar Contacts	Travel Agent, Tour Guide

BOUNTY HUNTER

Metatype: Dwarf
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Entertainment (trid reality shows)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
5	3	5	5	5	3	3	4	6	1

Condition Monitor	11/11
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 7
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Athletics skill group 2, Con 3, Etiquette 2, Intimidation 3, Negotiation 3, Perception 4, Pistols 4
Knowledge Skills	[City] Streets 3, Local Coyotes 3, Organized Crime 3, Safe Houses 4
Description	A Bounty Hunter will chase down a subject provided the price is right. She can track down anyone anywhere given enough time, money, and details on the person. Pricing also depends on if you want just a location, a corpse, or a still breathing subject. She is not subtle in her techniques as she works fast to get to the next target. She is one of the more refreshingly straightforward contacts with ten percent cash up front. There are also the arcane bounty hunters, who can use their Awakened talents to find people on little more than a cigarette stub or drop of blood. Of course their prices tend to be higher.

CHOP SHOP MECHANIC

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (easy to sell)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	5	3	3	4	5	5	2	6	3

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 6, Social 5
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Automotive Mechanic 8, Computers 4, Gunnery 4, Influence skill group 2, Pilot Ground Craft 6
Knowledge Skills	Car Dealers 4, Combat Biking 4, Junkyards 4, Vehicles 4
Description	She is gifted in taking apart and putting back together vehicles of various shapes and sizes. She takes advantage of her talent by selling parts of stolen vehicles on the black market and making illegal modifications to her clients' vehicles. For you, she can take out those bullet holes with no questions asked; she can also provide a loaner for the evening, provided you don't tell anyone where you got it and remember to ditch it as soon as possible.

CHURCH PASTOR

Metatype: Ork
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrunner job)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	3	3	4	4	3	5	6	7

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 6, Social 7
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 2, Etiquette 4, Leadership 5, Negotiation 4, Performance 3
Knowledge Skills	Magic Theory 4, Music 4, Religion 8
Description	You always need someone to talk to just to get things off your chest. Maybe you question why you are shooting people in the face for money and want some sort of sign or guidance. Your local pastor can give you that help. Maybe not everything can be worked out, but if you are trying to kick the habit, he's got your back.
Similar Contacts	Life Coach, Psychologist

CITY OFFICIAL

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 6
Type: Personal Favor
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrunner job)
Hobbies/Vice: Bad Habit (novacoke)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	4	4	4	3	4	6	6	7

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 8
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Acting skill group 4, Computers 4, Etiquette 5 (Corporate +2), Leadership 5, Negotiation 5, Pistols 3, Sneaking 3, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge Skills	Drugs 3, Drug Dealers 2, Law 6, Street Rumors 3
Description	The City Official is a typical bureaucrat who has used his charms and public image to sway the voters to elect him into a position of power. He is, however, more concerned about the needs of his boss and sponsors than those of the masses. He's the most honest con artist you'll ever meet. Always good for offering dirt on his political rivals and can possibly be persuaded to leverage the city's resources for a runner if it offers a career advantage.

CLUB KID

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (Corporate Script)
Hobbies/Vice: Personal Grooming (Fashion)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	2	4	5	6	7

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 7
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Artisan 4 (Fashion +2), Con 4 (Seduction +2), Negotiations 4, Performance 5 (Dance +2), Pistols 2
Knowledge Skills	Current Fashion 4, Night Clubs 3, Simstars 3, Street Rumors 4
Description	She stays on the bleeding edge of fashion, keeping a finger on the pulse of the city so she always knows where the party is. She thinks she knows everybody who's anybody and might have rubbed elbows with a few mega-power players. The club is her escape from her mundane wageslave existence.

COMPANY SUIT

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Old
Type: Legwork
Connection Rating: 4
Preferred Payment method: Cash (corporate scrip)
Hobbies/Vice: Social habit (alcohol)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	6	3

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Blades 5, Clubs 3, Con 4 (Fast-talking +2), Electronics skill group 4, Leadership 4, Negotiation 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 4
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Rumors 4, Corporate Safehouses 4, Organized Criminals 4, (City) Streets 4
Description	The Company Suit is a special executive agent for the corporation. She is the Law above corporate security and will most often take care of corporate matters, where shadowrunners aren't required. She has access to most of the corporations intelligence when required and some of its dirty secrets. However she is loyal to a fault and will not let shame fall on her corporation. She'll even die for her company, with the belief that they can fix it. While she will not work against her company, she will provide any intelligence that the corporation has to help take down a rival down or help her beloved parent corp.
Similar Contacts	Corporate Security Officer, Executive Wageslave

CON FANATIC

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Support
Preferred Payment method: Barter (hobby/vice items)
Hobbies/Vice: Entertainment (RPGs, ARLARP, Graphic Novels)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	3	4	5	3	4	4	3	6	2

Condition Monitor	9/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Artisan 3, Con 2, Impersonation 2, Leadership 2, Negotiation 2, Performance 3
Knowledge Skills	Hobby-Related Rules 4, Hobby-Related Trivia 4
Description	They know all the episodes of Neil the Ork Barbarian; they can explain the controversial history around the actors; they even have bootlegged copies of the short-lived Selena the Ork Amazon Princess. They have hardcopies of many rare graphic novels throughout the century (or digital copies when the hard stuff isn't affordable). They have customized agent software on their commlink designed to build characters based on personal/min maxing preferences and to track loot. And they have logged thousands of hours on the Gaming Grids to amass an army of toons and mules that even a decker would be jealous of. Is this of any use to a shadowrunner? Probably not, but these contacts work through all the bureaucratic paperwork to drive/fly to every convention possible across the different nations. Such a contact can help get the character to a location nearest the next convention with a convincing cover story. As a favor, he might allow the character to crash on the couch in the hotel or use his spare steampunk costume.
Similar Contacts	Music or Sports Fanatic.

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATOR

Metatype: Ork
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Type: Legwork
Connection Rating: 3
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (corporate scrip)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (smoking cigarettes)
Personal Life: Family

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 6, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 4, Con 2, Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), First Aid 3, Instruction 3, Leadership 2, Negotiation 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Corporate Rumors 5, Food Delivery Services 3, Hardware 2, Security Systems 3
Description	Found in many corporate offices, the Corporate Administrator is the human version of Matrix software that schedules appointments, greets guests, sets up celebrations and retirements, and plans out the daily schedule for individuals or groups. While the profession is archaic, the intuition and metahuman connection it provides cannot be substituted by software. Because of his position, he is the go-to person for help with both personal and business subjects. This makes the Administrator the center of gossip and rumors and news around the office. You want to know who is sleeping with who in the copy room or what new project has been handed down from above, or who to talk to at some other corporate office? Call the Corporate Admin. Corporate Administrators live on gossip and office supplies as it's how he works the system and makes himself invaluable to the other wageslaves.

CORPORATE WAGESLAVE

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (corporate scrip)
Hobbies/Vice: Vehicles (sports cars)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 1, Computers 4, Con 2, Etiquette 4 (Corp +2), Running 2, Software 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Corporate Rumor 3, Local Bars 2, Sports Cars 3, Trid Shows 3
Description	He is one of the faceless masses that works ten or more hours a day, six or more days a week for the great corporation. The benefits, as the corporation cheerfully states, include a corporate home, access to corporate-sponsored food, and the luxurious twice-a-decade corporate-sponsored vacations. He may feel stifled, confined, and limited, but he keeps at it in pursuit of better things. He believes if he works hard and long enough, he will move up the corporate ladder.

COYOTE

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (easy items to sell)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Widowed

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	4	5	3	4	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Athletics skill group 2, Computers 2, Con 3, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Impersonation 3, Leadership 2, Negotiation 4, Pistols 4
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 5, Magical Threats 3, Security Systems 4
Description	For every security border, there's someone who knows how to bypass it. For a hefty fee, she brings individuals or groups through tunnels, under fences, and/or by bribed guards from one nation to the next. For a favor, she might direct them to someone to get them the proper paperwork (fake SIN/permits) to be able to work and live in the new place.

CYBERNETIC TECHNICIAN

Metatype: Troll
Sex: Female
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 4
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrunner job)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (Smoking Cigarettes)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
6	4	5	6	4	5	4	4	6	1

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 6, Social 6
Initiative	9 + 1D6
Skills	Biotechnology 4, Computers 3, Cybertechnology 5, First Aid 3, Industrial Mechanic 3, Influence skill group 4, Medicine 4, Software 3
Knowledge Skills	Chemistry 2, Cybernetics 5, Drugs 4, Golf 4, Medical Specialists 4
Description	While the street doc works the flesh, the cybernetic technician repairs the metal. Her knowledge and interest in neuro-connections and micro-optical process has her working in a body shop. She's good at fixing worn-out and damaged parts, and if you're tired of looking through flesh eyes, she has a discount on Rating 3 cybernetic ones.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Old
Connection Rating: 6
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment method: Service (drek jobs)
Hobbies/Vice: Entertainment (artwork)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	4	3	4	2	3	4	6	3

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Con 2, Disguise 4, Etiquette 5 (Street +2), Firearms skill group 5, Intimidation 5, Leadership 4, Negotiation 5, Sneaking 4
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Rumors 6, Street Rumors 6
Description	Sometimes called a Spook or Man in Black, the Government Official is annoyingly enigmatic about why or how he knows things. Rumors have him working for the CIA, FBI, or some other agency, but no one officially acknowledges his existence in any of those places. Even your relationship is somewhat of a mystery as he offers knowledge in exchange for odd jobs, which make you wonder if you're seeing the bigger picture.

GANG BOSS

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrun job)
Hobbies/Vice: Bad Habit (dream chips)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
5	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Blades 4, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Negotiation 3, Sneaking 3
Knowledge Skills	BTLs 2, (City) Knowledge 4, Drugs 2, Street Gang Identification 4
Description	A Gang Boss has worked his way up with cunning and a gun to gain his piece of the world. He has intimidated an army of thugs, and in turn they respect him and his power. As a leader of a criminal organization, he has dealt with other criminals, so he knows more about the underworld than law enforcement. With a wealth of information and people to get it for him, a character must understand that a favor from the Gang Boss comes at a price.

ID MANUFACTURER

Metatype: Elf
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 5
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Family

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	4	3	3	4	5	6	4	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 6
Initiative	9 + 1D6
Skills	Artisan 4 (Writing +2), Con 3, Electronics skill group 4, Electronic Warfare 5, Etiquette 3 (Media +2), Hacking 5, Negotiation 4
Knowledge Skills	Grids 5, Matrix Security 4, Organized Crime 5, SIN Databases 4, Software 4
Description	The ID Manufacturer works behind the scenes using agents to gather and create data trails as she codes new SINs for clients. With plenty of demand for people wanting to be able to have their existence acknowledged so they can buy those corporate-advertised toys and get out of the barrens, she can pick and choose her clientele. If you have her as a contact, you were one of the fortunate that she will work for. Besides Fake SINs and licenses, she knows how to get real licenses, and since behind every SIN there's an artist, she can probably tell you the general seller of a specific SIN.

INFORMANT

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of interest
Personal Life: In a Relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	4	2	3	5	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/11
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	5 + 1D6
Skills	Con 5, Etiquette 3 (Yakuza +2), Negotiation 3, Palming 2, Pistols 2, Sneaking 4
Knowledge Skills	Drugs 2, Gang Identification 3, Organized Crime 5, Tattoo Identification 2
Description	The informant, also known as a stool pigeon, is a person of interest with privileged information about an organization or person. She has been working with some very bad men doing very bad things. Instead of leaving, she has decided to sell what she knows. How long this will last before she is found out is hard to tell.

INTERNATIONAL COURIER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 6
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment method: Cash (hard currency)
Hobbies/Vice: Vehicles (drones)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	5	4	4	3	3	4	6	3

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Con 5, Etiquette 3 (Corporate +2), Impersonation 4, Longarms 3, Negotiation 4, Pistols 4, Running 2, Stealth skill group 5, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge skills	Corporate Rumors 2, Geography 2, (Language) 4, (Language) 4
Description	Need pistols in Peoria? How about armored jackets in Amazonia or orichalcum in Hong Kong? The International Courier is a trusted transporter of various goods with the licensing and paperwork so he will not get stopped at checkpoints like other travelers. He's also good with alternative methods where bureaucracy fails. He is on the go 24/7 with some package. His time and services are valuable, so pricing goes up depending on the three words: what, where, and when.

LONE STAR DETECTIVE

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 5
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrunner job)
Hobbies/Vice: Family Obligations (brother)
Personal Life: In a Relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	4	3	5	4	2	5	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 4, Computers 3, Con 2, Etiquette 4 (Street +2), Intimidation 3, Perception 5, Pistols 4, Stealth skill group 4
Knowledge Skills	Crime Syndicates 4, Law Enforcement 4, Street Gang Identification 4, Street Rumors 4
Description	More than just a beat cop, the Lone Star Detective follows up on leads and suspects after the crime has occurred. A detective is good at observation, and unlike a simple beat cop she has access to old cases to go along with rap sheets and criminal SINs. While the Lone Star Detective's job is slightly more difficult with the SINless masses and a corporate jurisdiction quagmire, she has her cultivated sources. Through her, one can follow cases, examine evidence, or see who's in town.

KNIGHT ERRANT DISPATCHER

Metatype: Dwarf
Sex: Male
Age: Old Age
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrunner job)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/11
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 6, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 4, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Leadership 3, Perception 4, Pistols 3
Knowledge Skills	Law Enforcement 4, Security Systems 4
Description	They don't walk the streets, but they have a finger on the pulse of the city. They monitor security alarms, law-enforcement radios, and panic buttons. They have their fellow officer's back as they coordinate backup to high-threat situations. A dispatcher can be very useful for shadowrunners, possibly telling them when they've been spotted or how long and from what direction that Lone Star response is coming. Most of this would be under special circumstances that there will not be a fight. A dispatcher is also good in tracking active events in a city: stakeouts, SWAT teams, and chases.

MAFIA CONSIGLIERE

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 5
Type: Personal Favor
Preferred Payment Method: Service (drek job)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Electronics skill group 4, Etiquette 4 (Mafia +2), Intimidation 4, Leadership 6, Perception 4, Pistols 5, Unarmed Combat 2
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Business 4, Law 4, Local Politics 4
Description	(p. 391, *SR5*)

MEDIA MOGUL

Metatype: Elf
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 5
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment Method: Service (free-labor jobs)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (elven wines)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	4	3	3	4	3	5	6	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 8
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Artisan 4 (Writing +2), Con 4, Electronics skill group 4, Etiquette 5 (Media +2), Intimidation 4, Negotiation 6
Knowledge Skills	Corporate Rumors 5, Elven Wines 4, Expensive Restaurants 4, Street Rumors 5
Description	The Media Mogul decides what information is deemed worthy to be broadcast to the subscribers on the corporate grid. It doesn't really matter how accurate it is, as long as the masses eat it up. The Media Mogul channels the voice of the corporation in promoting corporate products, trids, and newsworthy stories. Things happen fast for those who want to stay popular, so he has an army of news journalists, glitterati drones, and corporate spies to make sure his masses are the first to know when news drops. This also means that time is money to him, so you have to be succinct and make it worth his while in order to keep his attention for more than two seconds.
Similar Contacts	Horizon Spin Doctor, KSAF Showrunner

METAHUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Metatype: Ork
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (items for the profession)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (cigars)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business!

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
6	5	5	5	4	3	3	2	6	1

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 3, Etiquette 4 (Media +2), Leadership 4, Negotiation 3, Performance 3 (Acting +2), Running 3, Stealth skill group 2
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Local Gangs 3, Safehouses 3, Street Rumor 3
Description	Always fighting for equal rights, the Metahuman Rights Activist travels around to bring light on vital issues and shame to those denying rights to their fellow metahuman. While not as visibly present as they were twenty years ago, they are still around, and we're easy to spot during recent Seattle events involving the Ork Underground. Metahuman Rights Activists know people in various positions that can help them get around security, know where to set up a protest, or get critical information out there. Like-minded shadowrunners can exploit such information for their own ends, provided they fund the cause. Based on their relationship with the character, the Metahuman Rights Activist may be able to put together a protest as a distraction to other activities.
Similar Contacts	Green Peace, Sapient Rights

NEWS REPORTER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Service (shadowrunner job)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (alcohol)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 2, Etiquette 3 (Media +2), Perception 4, Sneaking 4, Tracking 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Gang Identification 3, Local Bars 3, Street Rumors 3
Description	News Reporters are always in the face of newsworthy events with an electronic eye or ear, be it their own or a drone. And they don't take no for an answer, especially if pursuing the answer puts nuyen on the table. They have their own host of people and databases from which they can get rumors and statistics, but it's the real dirt, hidden in safes or behind closed doors, that they are after. So with a little trade in services, the news reporter may share vital intel in return for the runner's hand in retrieving paydata, tailing, or wiretapping a conversation.

PARAZOOLOGIST

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Legwork
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (items related to the profession)
Hobbies/Vice: Animals (paracritters)
Personal Life: Family

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	3	3	3	4	5	3	3	6	2

Condition Monitor	9/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 6, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Animal Handling 3, Biotechnology 4, Instruction 4, Perception 4
Knowledge Skills	Law 3, Magic Theory 2, Parazoology 6, Wildlife Areas 3
Description	The Parazoologist has had his nose in the books since the Sixth World arrived, studying and cataloging all the various new critters and variations. His study includes their habits, abilities, weaknesses, and sometimes how to train them. Some Parazoologists work with zoos or review collected specimens, while others are out in the field collecting and observing critters in their natural habit. He's always happy to help in identifying the next Awakened thing that the shadowrunner comes across. He also loves to get specimens from time to time.

PAWN BROKER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Old
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Swag
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (easy items to sell)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (alcohol)
Personal Life: In a relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	2	4	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 2, Etiquette 2 (Street +2), Longarms 3, Negotiation 5, Perception 5
Knowledge Skills	Item Appraisal 3, Street Rumors 2, Tech Trends 2
Description	Part of the neighborhood's eyes and ears, the Pawn Broker sees people come in and out, hears their stories of hardship, and knows a few of their routines. While she's good at buying and selling goods, she also has knowledge of her customers' habits or changes in routine. And sometimes she has some wiz, if used, gear.
Similar Contacts	Antique Dealer

PHARMACY TECH

Metatype: Elf
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Swag
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	5	3	2	4	6	5	2	6	1

Condition Monitor	9/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Biotechnology 4, Chemistry 5, Electronics skill group 2, Etiquette 2, Medicine 5, Negotiation 2, Perception 4
Knowledge Skills	Botany 2, Chemistry 4, Corporate Business 5, Drugs 6, Law 5
Description	These days, the technology to create drugs has exceeded the ability for any government to regulate them. Only the hostilities between corporations over patents keep most drugs on the market in check. A Pharmacy Tech has the chemical and biological knowledge to create, deconstruct, and in some cases neutralize drug effects. Some even have knowledge of bad combinations or their effects on other sapient species. A Pharmacy Tech can provide illegal drugs without a prescription, refill a medkit's painkillers or antibiotics, or supply those handy slap patches.
Similar Contacts	High School Chemistry Teacher

POPULAR MEFEED PERSONALITY

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Personal Grooming (fashion)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Artisan 3 (Writing +2), Computers 4, Etiquette 3 (Media +2), Perception 3
Knowledge Skills	Local Decker Bars 3, Local Restaurants 3, Sports 3, Street Rumors 3
Description	Ranting and raving on the Matrix is nothing new. Popular MeFeed Personalities share photos, audio clips, and text from their grid subscription as they mingle with their public and bask in their adoring (though occasionally angry) glow. Subscriptions to dancing cats or lists of what's for dinner are cute and all, but some people are talented enough to find the right words and images to create a following. They are rarely anonymous and mostly harmless in what they do, but they can influence some opinions. Depending on the following, you can ask the contact if any of his subscribers can help. In the vast wasteland of Matrix entertainment, it's always possible that someone knows something.

RECICLADORE

Metatype: Troll
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Swag
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (easy items to sell)
Hobbies/Vice: Bad Habit (dream chip)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business!

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
7	4	3	7	4	3	4	2	6	1

Condition Monitor	12/10
Limits	Physical 8, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 3, Etiquette 2 (Street +2), First Aid 3, Perception 3, Survival 2
Knowledge Skills	Biotechnology 4, BTLs 3, Chemistry 4, Twentieth Century Technology 3
Description	The current trend of what to do with trash is to bury it to make it go away. But like information on the Matrix, it doesn't always stay buried. A Recicladore lives and works from trash dumps, making a living recycling and using what's been buried for generations. Need a DVD player? *Readers Digest* in paper form? How about a twentieth-century car engine? A Recicladore collects many low-tech items or raw materials. Communities of recicladores trade recyclables for foodstuffs and medicine, and this Recicladore is no exception. Standard currency can be used to buy his stuff, but it's not preferred as most communities are barter societies. Recicladores have the advantage of knowing just where a body—dead or alive—can be stashed and never found.
Similar Contacts	Junkyard Operator, Water/Sewage Treatment Worker

RENT-A-COP

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Personal Favor
Preferred Payment method: Service (drek jobs)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
5	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	6	2

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 4
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Intimidation 3, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pistols 2
Knowledge Skills	Gang Identification 3, Local Cheap Food 4, Security Systems 2,Street Rumors 3
Description	While he has been given a gun and a badge, he does not have the same training or discipline as those employed with Lone Star or Knight Errant. He has been hired cheaply by some mall or minor corporation to have a presence that will deter criminals. He believes that chicks dig the uniform. Unfortunately if the shit hits the fan, his contract does not cover taking a bullet for the company. While on the job, he keeps his eyes and ears open to what is going on, plus he's given authorization to walk around and access most spots in his assigned beat.

ROCKSTAR

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 4
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment Method: Service (free-labor job)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	5	3	3	4	2	3	5	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 4, Social 7
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 2, Computers 3, Etiquette 4 (Media +2), Negotiation 4, Perception 4, Performance 5 (Singing +2), Pilot Ground Craft 3, Stealth skill group 4
Knowledge Skills	(Language) 3, Music Industry 3, Musical Instruments 3, Street Rumors 2
Description	Millions of fans follow every move she makes on the matrix and pour over every detailed on her MeFeed. Corporations fight to the death for her to promote or sponsor their products. She is wildly popular with the masses, and everybody wants to be her friend. This allows her to meet with virtually anyone when she travels the globe to play her music. This makes her a worthy contact to use in order to contact influential people. The trick is staying out of the spotlight when meeting her and making sure any actions don't get tied back to her—otherwise that's another burned bridge.
Similar Contacts	Simsense Star, Trid Star

SAFEHOUSE MASTER

Metatype: Dwarf
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (corporate scrip)
Hobbies/Vice: Entertainment (music)
Personal Life: In a Relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
5	3	3	5	5	2	3	4	6	1

Condition Monitor	1/11
Limits	Physical 6, Mental 5, Social 7
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 3, Etiquette 3 (Corp +2), First Aid 3, Leadership 3, Negotiation 2, Perception 4, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 2
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 2, Corporate Politics 3, (Language) 3, Security Systems 4
Description	As his title states, he is the master of the safehouse. His objective is to protect the people temporarily residing there. This sometimes means protecting these people against themselves. He makes sure that they keep a low profile, including avoiding the Grid and any Demi-GODs roaming around. He is disciplined, keeps strict hours, and monitors those who enter and leave the house.

SCRIPT KIDDIE

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Entertainment (action trideos)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	2	4	3	4	5	4	3	6	2

Condition Monitor	9/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 6, Social 6
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 3, Cybercombat 1, Electronic Warfare 4, Etiquette 2 (Matrix+2), Hacking 3, Hardware 2, Negotiation 2
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Decker Hangouts 4, Malware 3, Street Rumors 4, Trideos 4
Description	There are deckers, and then there are wannabe deckers, often known as Script Kiddies. They're clever, often using homemade decks assembled from commlink parts, sweat, and chutzpah. They load them up with malware programs and coded viruses, then set about causing chaos wherever they can. While not as sophisticated or dangerous as a decker, she can still surprise you with what she can access in the Matrix.

SPRAWL GANGER

Metatype: Ork
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Networking
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Personal Grooming (shoes)
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
6	3	5	5	4	2	3	2	6	1

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	8 + 1D6
Skills	Clubs 2, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Survival 3, Unarmed Combat 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Gang Territory 3
Description	The Sprawl Ganger survived the barrens and found a family in the form of a gang. He's uncouth and arrogant in the way of street toughs. He's also someone that you can trust to walk the streets, shake a few trees, and see what falls out.

SQUATTER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (hobby/vice items)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (alcohol)
Personal Life: None of Your Damn Business!

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	3	3	4	2	4	2	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 5
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Blades 2, Con 1, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Intimidation 1, Perception 3, Sneaking 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Drugs 2, Dumpster Diving 3, Gang Identification 3, Street Rumors 2
Description	Squatters have no money and no residence—like the thousands of other SINless who live in the city. Can't loan you any money and probably aren't educated or literate enough to help with legwork. But with so many around, many people tend to ignore them. This is their asset: anonymity. As a contact, the Squatter can sit and watch a place for days, reporting who's coming and going—provided that the character keeps him fed.

STORE OWNER

Metatype: Elf
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Smoking (cigarettes)
Personal Life: In a relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	6	1

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Artisan 2, Blades 2, Etiquette 3 (Corp +2), Negotiation 3, Perception 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Politics 3, Media Trivia 3, Street Rumors 3, Thrift Stores 3
Description	A Store Owner is always good for friendly advice and, depending on the store, a free meal or help with fixing something. A Store Owner is also a fixed point in a city, regularly in a spot where she can observe the comings and goings of residents around her, know the word on the street, and what changes may be coming.
Similar Contacts	Mobile Food Truck Operator, Street Vendor

STREET DOC

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Old
Connection Rating: 4
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (items needed for the profession)
Hobbies/Vice: Family Obligations (kids)
Personal Life: Family

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
3	3	3	2	4	4	2	3	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Chemistry 4, Computers 4, Con 2, Cybertechnology 3, First Aid 4, Influence skill group 4, Medicine 6, Pistols 4
Knowledge Skills	BTLs 3, Drugs 4, Medical Centers 4, Street Rumors 3
Description	(p. 392, *SR5*)

STREET KID

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 1
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (easy items)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: Single

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	6	1

Condition Monitor	9/9
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 4, Social 5
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Etiquette 2 (Street +2), Palming 2, Perception 2, Sneaking 4, Survival 3
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 3, Street Rumors 3
Description	The Street Kid was born, naturally, on the streets. Quite literally, in fact. There are many like him in the barrens. His family are people he's found whom he can trust, and they are few. He's small enough to be ignored, but don't give him the brush-off as he might know something useful. Also be careful—in his eyes, you are somebody, and that's more than he can say for his parents.

TALISMONGER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Female
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 3
Type: Swag
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Personal Grooming (clothes)
Personal Life: Family

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	3	3	5	3	3	4	6	2

Condition Monitor	10/11
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 7
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Alchemy 4, Arcana 4, Assensing 3, Etiquette 3 (Magic +2), Negotiation 4, Perception 3, Sorcery skill group 2
Knowledge Skills	Magical Threats 5, Magic Theory 5, Parabotany 2
Description	(p. 392, *SR5*)

TAXI DRIVER

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Support
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (corporate scrip)
Hobbies/Vice: Vehicles (cars)
Personal Life: Widowed

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
4	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	6	3

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 5, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	6 + 1D6
Skills	Automotive Mechanic 2, Blades 2, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Negotiation 2, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 5
Knowledge Skills	(City) Knowledge 4, (City) Streets 4, Street Rumors 4
Description	Need to travel around and don't have the wheels or know all the shortcuts in the city? The Taxi Driver can help you get around. He works most of the day and his ride blends in to almost any surrounding, especially in sprawls. As a favor, the driver could pick up the contact if he's in trouble, even if that trouble is in the barrens. But you'd better tip well.

TERRAFIRST! ACTIVIST

Metatype: Dwarf
Sex: Female
Age: Young
Connection Rating: 4
Type: Personal Favor
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (illegal items)
Hobbies/Vice: Social Habit (cigars)
Personal Life: Divorced

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
5	3	4	5	5	4	3	3	4	1

Condition Monitor	1/11
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 6, Social 6
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Acting skill group 4, Armorer 3, Automatics 4, Computers 3, Demolitions 6, Etiquette 3 (Media +2), Intimidation 3, Perception 3
Knowledge Skills	Chemistry 3, Corporate Politics 3, Corporate Rumors 3, Language 3, Safehouses 3, Street Rumors 3
Description	The TerraFirst! Activist is totally devoted to her cause—namely, opposition to environmental destruction. She believes the extreme actions she takes are the only actions available to her. She targets those who she believes are enemies to her cause. Collateral damage is justified as those who should not have turned a blind eye to the damage being done to the environment.

TRID PIRATE

Metatype: Ork
Sex: Male
Age: Old
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Shadow Service
Preferred Payment Method: Cash (credstick)
Hobbies/Vice: Bad Habit (trip chips)
Personal Life: In a Relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
6	3	3	5	4	3	4	3	6	4

Condition Monitor	11/10
Limits	Physical 7, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative	7 + 1D6
Skills	Computers 5, Electronic Warfare 5, Hacking 3, Hardware 3, Influence skill group 2, Performance 3, Software 3
Knowledge Skills	Grids 4, Media Stars 3, Street Rumors 3, Wired Technology 4
Description	The Trid Pirate is the icon of old-school Pink Mohawk runners. He rebels against the corporations by disrupting media broadcasts with his own version of the truth. Most often he can get away with generating noise to "wake the wageslave zombie from doing work for the Man." He's always good for distraction or a laugh, and sometimes the "hidden truths" he says he knows have the virtue of actually being true.

USED CAR SALESMAN

Metatype: Human
Sex: Male
Age: Middle-aged
Connection Rating: 2
Type: Swag
Preferred Payment Method: Barter (items for the profession)
Hobbies/Vice: Nothing of Interest
Personal Life: In a Relationship

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	Ess	Edg
2	3	3	3	4	3	2	4	4	2

Condition Monitor	10/10
Limits	Physical 4, Mental 5, Social 6
Initiative: 6 + 1D6	6 + 1D6
Skills	Automotive Mechanic 3, Con 5, Etiquette 4 (Street +2), Negotiation 6, Perception 3
Knowledge Skills	Cars 4, Grid Guide 4, Street Rumors 4
Description	The Used Car Salesman has all kinds of used, anonymous vehicles for you to buy or rent. He has the charm of a low-budget trid star and can make you believe that you are getting a great deal. Careful, though, as he is a master of selling a sow's ear as a silk purse. Hot cars are not a problem—just slap on a new coat of paint and switch grid IDs. He doesn't remember faces too well unless they owe him money, but he never forgets a car.

BOSSES & BETRAYERS

- Some chummers of mine heard we were putting together a primer on Mr. Johnsons and fixers, and they gave me the name of a person to talk to. So, allow me to introduce Mr Johnson ... Well, all I know is that his real name is Martin. He is a professional Mr. Johnson working for one of the megas (I'm not supposed to say which one). Recent events have apparently left him favorably inclined to giving us runners a leg up. He's ... a little abrasive. Well, okay, he's a complete asshole. But he has valuable insight from the other side of the fence, so I'd advise you to listen carefully to what he has to say.
- Bull

JOHNSONS AND FIXERS BASICS

Hi. My name is Mister Johnson. Nice to meet you.

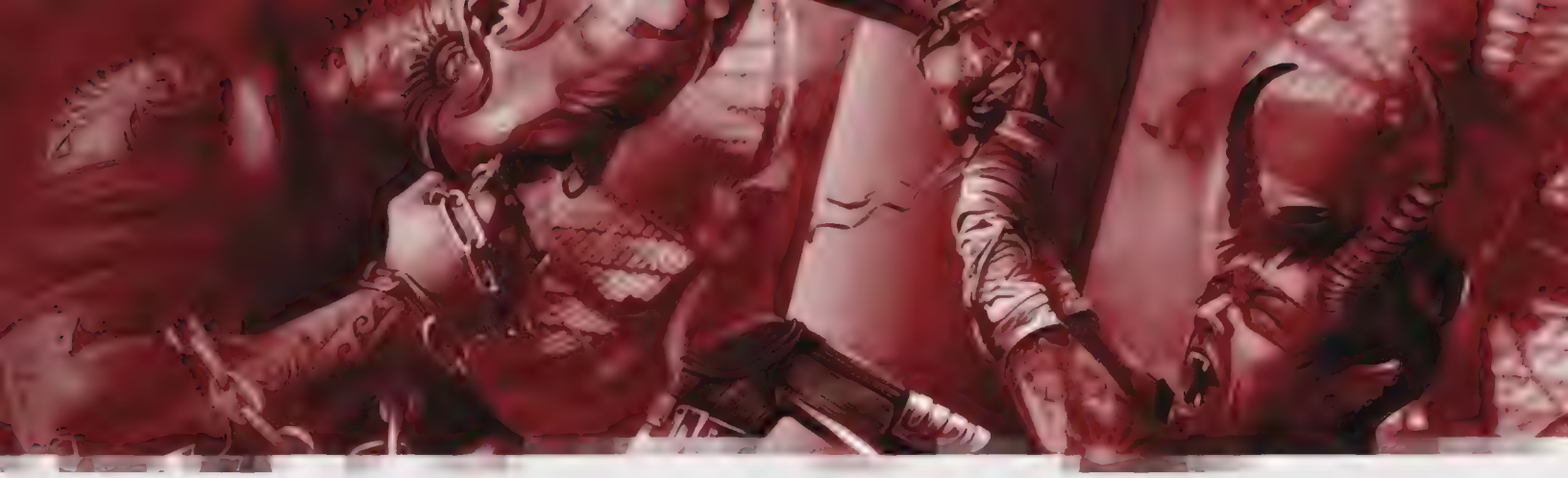
I've said this to at least a hundred shadowrunner teams in my career so far. Some of those shadowrunners got a fair shake from me. Fair wages for fair work. Some of those shadowrunners teams never saw a dime of the money I promised them because I sent them to their deaths.

Johnsons, fixers, and shadowrunners. What a merry family we all are. Sometimes it's worth taking a breath while you're reloading. Pop your smartgun over the wall and take a look around. Refocus. If you're reading this, you've done at least a job or two. Most likely you're a seasoned veteran. So you have, by definition, dealt with a Johnson and almost certainly a fixer. These two categories are indispensable to your life as a runner, and they deserve a closer look.

Mr. Johnson is *anyone* who hires you to do a job. If I hired you right now to go buy me a soykaf across the street, I'd be your Mr. Johnson. That's it. That's the definition of Mr. Johnson. Not too complex at the surface, right? But in this little concept lie all the hopes and aspirations and fears of shadowrunners. Fact is, in the vast majority of cases you are doing something illegal for Mr. Johnson. Sometimes it's a little illegal, or at least a little grey area. Sometimes you're doing something horribly illegal. And it is due to this little fact that a Johnson is so much more than just the person hiring you. By hiring you to do something illegal, Mr. Johnson is just as guilty of the crime. He becomes a criminal. He exposes himself to repercussions. To protect himself from the law, he must slink through the moist cracks between the rocks and come live with the creepy crawling things of the night, just like you.

And because Johnsons are humans, they react to this situation. The social covenants we call laws no longer apply. Mr. Johnson breaks the law, so he can no longer be protected by it. The Johnson is thus now entirely responsible for his own safety. This is where all your troubles come from. Because no matter what, it's personal. I know I have said it—"Nothing personal, chummer." But that isn't really true. To some degree or another, it's almost always personal. Mr. Johnson risks his freedom and, more immediately, his life every time he dips in and deals with shadowrunners. That means he's going to seek to protect himself, and this is going to dictate his reactions to the engagement. Johnsons are to a degree stereotypical. It's true. You can say it, doesn't make you prejudiced. Depending on the Johnson's background, you can expect certain things from him. We're going to get back to that later.

For now, let's talk about the other side of the coin: the fixer. As simple as Mr. Johnson's definition was, a fixer's is far broader. A fixer is a middleman. That's pretty vague. Middleman for what? The answer here is "everything and anything." Fixers make their living by providing goods and services to both sides of the shadowrun engagement—Johnsons and shadowrunners. Primarily, a fixer will seek to build himself a stable of reliable shadowrunners. The key word here is *reliable*. You'd be amazed how many wannabe swinging-dicks think they have what it takes to be a shadowrunner, only to fall apart (sometimes literally, aided by bullets) during a mission. Good shadowrunners that will reliably pull off missions and come back for more are incredibly rare. With experience, a fixer builds a little black book so that he can then turn around and offer his services to Mr. Johnson. Finding Johnsons isn't that easy, but once a good fixer gets the ball rolling, word-of-mouth goes a long way. If you hadn't noticed yet, it's all about reputation in this biz. Mr. Johnson wants shadowrunners, but in



most cases he does not have the time or know-how to find runners himself. So, he relies on fixers, who present themselves as one-stop shops. They'll assemble a crew and provide them to Mr. Johnson so Mr. Johnson is free to focus on his core business, which is fucking someone over somewhere.

Obviously, the fixer isn't doing this out of the kindness of his heart; he intends to make money. There are several ways for this to happen. In some cases, Mr. Johnson may pay the entire sum to the fixer, and the fixer will pay whatever he thinks he can get away with to the shadowrunners. In this case, your fixer sort of becomes your Mr. Johnson as well. Messy, I know. The second option is for the fixer to simply charge Mr. Johnson a fee for the service of having provided a crew, and then step out of the equation.

The advantage of the first option is that the fixer can often make more money this way. Unfortunately, his payment becomes intimately linked to the proper completion of the mission, so the fixer is taking on additional risk. He also gains a strong incentive to make sure things go as planned, so he'll need to micro-manage you. Unpleasant, I know.

The advantage of the second option is the fixer gets his money more easily and then he has no further part in the mission, leaving him free to focus his energy on setting up the next deal. Most fixers prefer working this way.

Of course, you should also know by now that fixers offer a variety of other services. They can hook up shadowrunners with a slew of other useful talented individuals (discreet mechanics, street docs, arms dealers, etc.) and sometimes sell (and buy) illicit goods directly. This makes sense, as what the fixer is doing here is garnishing his core business (talent agency) with extra services his clients might require. It's the human equivalent of the insistent and handy "related products" AROs you see hovering when you check out at a store. Taking on a mission? Well, you're going to need a pistol, right? And bullets? And a medkit would be nice, in case you get shot. Speaking of that, how about some body armor? And maybe a car to get to the job. Get the idea? Again, the fixer may hook you up with someone, having charged a fee to that supplier, or he may buy and sell the items direct, in order to maintain more control and get a higher margin. However, most fixers are not too keen on stockpiling crates full of illegal items in a warehouse somewhere, so more often than not, they'll simply direct you to a supplier.

- It's certainly not uncommon for a fixer to charge a "finder's fee" both ways—to the supplier and to you. Not much you can do about that, but keep in mind whatever he's charging is negotiable.
- 2XL

- If she isn't too strapped for liquid nuyen, a fixer will often trade for favors.
- Pistons

LIFECYCLE OF AN ENGAGEMENT

THE MEET

There are, broadly speaking, three parts to your typical engagement. The first is the meet with Mr. Johnson. There are a number of things to keep in mind here. This is essentially a job interview. Remember that job interviews go both ways. On one hand, you want to reassure Mr. Johnson that you're the right team for the job. The key here is confidence. Not bravado—confidence. Act like you know what you're doing. Demonstrate your expertise by asking expert questions. One thing that you should know is that "acting professional" doesn't mean being Mr. Johnson's whipping boy. Show some backbone. Don't get pushed around. Dress according to where the meet occurs—not for whom it occurs. What I mean by this is that if you're meeting Mr. J in a fancy restaurant, it'll behoove you to dress well. Not for the Johnson, but because you don't want to attract the attention of the people around you. If on the other hand you're meeting Mr. J in an alley, don't dress in a suit to please Mr. J. Dress like you normally would and use the language you normally would. Mr. J is paying for your expertise, not for him to have a pleasant conversation.

- The exception here might if you're being hired specifically to slink into a fancy party or something. Showing Mr. Johnson a preview of your ability to appear high society will help you get the job.
- Thorn

Further, consider what gear you'll be bringing. In this day and age, the odds you are walking into a police sting operation are next to none. So under normal circumstances, you don't need to worry about getting caught packing all kinds of illegal goods. What you do need to worry about are ambushes. One of your enemies (and you know you have them) may have set up a false Johnson with a false job to get you where they want and take you down. Or a third party might hear about your meet and choose that moment to ambush you. These are going to be rare occurrences, but you may as well prepare for them, especially when meeting with a new Johnson for the first time. So pack as much heat as possible. I'm going to warn you though, there is a point where you reach disrespect toward Mr. Johnson. You show up packing assault rifles with safeties off and have your troll sammy packing two assault cannons, and you are going to look like (dangerous) fools and turn your (soon to be former) employer off. Broadly speaking, the rules are to wear nothing bigger than an armored jacket and the weapons that can be concealed beneath it. You don't need to actually conceal them from Mr J—you just need to show you made an effort to holster your weapons. Pistols in holsters, SMGs in slings, and (if you must insist on bringing them) rifles slung as well.

Special etiquette lesson for the magical types: *Never* use magic during a meeting. Most Johnsons are well versed in what magic can do—the real stuff, not stuff from the trid. They are especially wary of any mood or mind-controlling spells. If Mr. Johnson notices magic, it almost guarantees you won't get hired. Even if you actually pull of a mind-control spell and the Johnson doesn't notice, when he does come to his senses, you can pretty much guarantee you will have earned a serious black mark. So, let's all repeat together: No magic during meetings.

- While it's true doing a Mindprobe on Mr. Johnson will only serve to get a bounty on your head, nobody is really going to hold it against you if you have a Detect Enemy spell going, or that sort of stuff. So long as you aren't trying to gain an "unfair" advantage in your negotiation, it should be all right.
- Jimmy No

- I find the reverse to be woefully untrue. Many Johnsons will gladly use magic against you, the little bastards. It certainly isn't taboo to counterspell any magic being slung at you, I'll tell you that.
- Clockwork

Etiquette aside, the rest of the meeting is for you to get what you need. There are three things you want to find out now. One, as many details about the job as possible. Two, does Mr. Johnson intend to pay you and how much. Three, does Mr. Johnson intend to kill you.

The first one is probably obvious. Now is the time to ask all your questions about the mission. Don't ask any questions about Mr. Johnson or his employer or why they need this done. You're going to have to figure this out by yourself. If you ask him, he's just going to lie about it. Or, if he's clever, he's going to feed you lies within truths, and then you're going to be fucked because you won't know what to believe. Don't ask anything that can be lied about. Focus on the details of the job. How many guards, where reinforcements come from, how long until they arrive, what security measures are in place, etc.

It's very possible the Johnson doesn't know all this. In fact, it's more likely than not. But milk him for what he does know. Sometimes, Johnsons don't realize they know things that matter, so get everything you can.

- Some Johnsons come from cultures where asking questions will only earn you a disdained glance followed by "It's part of your job to figure this out." Martin talks about different background cultures a little later, so keep this in mind.
- Baka Dabora

These little details now taken care of, we turn to the more unpleasant aspects of working as a shadowrunner: your Johnson may either not intend to pay you, or not intend to pay you *and* kill you at the end of the job. As a professional, you need to know how to look out for that. There are two primary reasons why Mr. Johnson may not intend to pay you: He is flat broke but still needs something done, or he thinks you are a pushover and he can get away with it.

Following my advice earlier about showing some backbone should help a little against the second problem. In any case, the first warning sign is that the money is too good, or the Johnson isn't negotiating very hard. You ask for something and he says "okay" right away. Think about it—it's no skin off his back if he doesn't intend to give you anything, is it? The other warning signs for this sort of play can be that Mr. Johnson shows up with an overwhelming force of bodyguards, he acts aggressively during the meeting, or finally and most commonly, you are a team without an established reputation.

There is a common thread to all of these things—the *rapport de force*. That's French for "who has the biggest dick." In the normal world, contracts legally bind parties (and even then all kinds of dirty tricks can happen). In the shadows, you are outside the law. The only fairness that exists is the one you create for yourself. If you can't back up your desire to get paid with adequate unpleasant consequences for Mr. Johnson, then he has no in-

centive to pay you. Think on what I just said real hard. I *routinely* fuck shadowrunners out of their money, and I'm proud to say so. Why? Because I can. If you don't have a reputation, burning you won't cause me any real issue. If you don't pack enough firepower to really scare me, then fuck you, you little worm. Don't let this happen to you. Show Mr. Johnson you mean business. And for God's sake, *never* hand over the goods until you have been paid.

Final thing to look for in your initial meet: Will Mr. Johnson try to kill you at the end? Ah, this is an unpleasant one. You need to be *real* careful here. Mr. Johnson might try to liquidate you if having *any* sort of witness is an issue. This typically happens with politicians or extremists. Unlike the payment thing, if your Johnson is good, there aren't always a ton of warning signs for this. Your biggest defense is checking on Mr. Johnson's background—past jobs, that sort of thing. Johnsons who kill their teams are typically recidivists and they earn black marks from savvy teams fast enough. You can believe me or not, but I have never liquidated a team after the job. That kind of stuff earns you serious bad rep in the community. Veteran teams can get over a Johnson not paying some green numbnuts, but killing any team, even green newbs, is taboo. So, check your Johnson's rep in the shadows.

THE RUN

So, you've met the Johnson, got as much info as you can, and are reasonably sure he does not intend to screw you over as a matter of course. Now comes that whole middle part we Johnsons typically care so little about. We want you to go away and only surface when the job is done. The name of the game now is simply "don't call me." But it's a little more complicated than that, so it's worth talking about it a tad more.

If everything is going well, there is no reason to talk to Mr. Johnson, so don't. Every time you communicate with your Johnson, you risk exposure. As the mission progresses, you have to be more and more discreet. You've been doing legwork, asking around about this or that, doing some Matrix, magical, or physical recon.

Even if you're really good, there is a chance your target might start thinking something's up. They might not know the exact target site or the exact goal, but they may start having an inkling they are being targeted. Once that happens, they are going to start trying to figure out more. As shadowrunners, you guys don't exist and are very hard to investigate. But Johnsons are typically known. Other shadow players know about each other. They know who works for who, and it's a lot easier to set up surveillance against a Johnson than it is against runners. All that to say, if you contact your Johnson, you might contaminate yourself. Like a virus jumping hosts, you're going to end up with a surveillance team gunning for you. Oh, and, by the way, there is an unwritten rule in the shadows that Johnsons don't attack other Johnsons. Shadowrunners, however, are totally fair game.

The preface to this whole "don't call me" bit was "if everything is going well." Have you done a lot of runs that went exactly according to plan? Yeah, didn't think so. Problems happen. Being able to manage those problems without resorting to calling your Johnson is a mark of your maturity and professionalism. That being said, if you hit such a large snafu that your mission is fundamentally compromised, it's time to call Mr. Johnson. Trust me, we would rather know that something is completely off than have you keep quiet and bungle dealing with it. I once had a team call me because the VIP I sent them to extract got extracted an hour earlier by another team. I asked them if they knew where the other team was. They said yes, they have been monitoring them. I asked them why the hell they had called me then, just get in there and nab him back from the other team. So, bad reason to call me—it was within their power to get me my VIP. I don't care if the mission parameters changed from silent-sneaky hotel infiltration to boom-boom-bang kill-all-the-other-runners. Can you get me my VIP? Yes? Then do it.

On the other hand, one of my favorite teams once called me to say they had discovered the scientist I had asked them to extract had apparently become host to a bug spirit following a weekend trip to Metropole. This changed things. I told them to change the mission to extract all files related to this project and put two in the scientist's head instead. Good reason to call.

- Goddamn bugs, always ruining our picnics.
- Slamm-0!

- These days, you're likely to run into complications due to CFD. Don't forget, that shit is contagious. I'd say this is a good reason to call your Johnson.
- Stone

THE HANDOFF

As tense as the initial meeting might have been, nothing compares to the handoff. This is when you return to Mr. Johnson with success in whatever endeavor he had you doing and collect the rest of your payment (you got paid a portion upfront, right?).

Everything you have been doing leads up to this moment. This is the moment of truth, as they say. If you want to survive—nay, prosper—then pay attention here. The first thing you need to do is make sure that you have leverage. Beware of runs where you do something and ... that's it. You have nothing to give to Mr. Johnson. You simply want payment. These are bad. If you have leverage, Mr. Johnson needs to be careful to get what you have before doing anything stupid. Extractions, thefts, that sort of stuff—these are the best. Sabotage, assassination ... these are risky. You already did everything you needed to do as part of the mission. You have no more leverage. The *only* incentives Mr. Johnson now has to pay you is keeping a good reputation and avoiding you being pissed off and coming for him. These two points are *not* that big of a deal for most Johnsons. So, ideally, always make sure you have leverage. If you're going to kill someone, make sure you are paid almost entirely before you pull the trigger. If you got, say, eighty percent of your payment, it's almost childish for the Johnson to hold back the remaining twenty percent. But flip those numbers around, and suddenly Mr. Johnson might figure he'd rather keep the money. I'm going to tell you a little secret—every time we Johnsons fuck you over money, we get to personally keep that money, since we always report that we paid it to you. That nice, untraceable money ends up in our bank accounts. Papa needs a new Westwind, baby! So, keep in mind the incentive to not pay you is pretty strong.

- Jerks.
- Pistons

Next, always control the environment. You have leverage right? So you tell Mr. Johnson where to meet. If he wants his prototype, make him come and get it. During the initial meet, I advised you to display some etiquette and show some restraint with your weapons and armor. Not so now. At this point, treat Mr. Johnson like a potential hostile. Set up an ambush. Get your sniper in position overlooking the meet. Let your combat monster bring his Centurion combat axe. Have your hacker scan the Johnson's team to detect weapons. Go nuts. Be prepared. And what's more, go ahead and let Mr. Johnson see you are in charge here. You might not want to reveal your sniper's position, but visible weapons and letting him know you have a bead on his guys is a-ok. You are basically trying to intimidate him. If you succeed, he will pay you what he owes you. Up to this point, he may have thought he'd get away with not paying you. He may have even thought he'd simply liquidate you. Now is the time to show him those things would be *really* bad ideas.

However, two rules. First, don't get carried away. Never ask for more than was agreed. This is a sure way

to not get hired again. Holding a gun to your Johnson's head and saying you deserve more is robbery, not professionalism. Second, while at this point unleashing a little bit of detection magic, maybe even some illusions is okay, using any sort of mind probe or control spells is out of the question right until the point bullets start flying. Until that time, no matter how hairy it gets, *never* manipulate your Johnson. This will earn you a black mark and, quite probably, a bounty on your head.

Overall, the handoff is always going to be a tense affair. Even if the initial meet went off splendidly, all bets are always off at the handoff. Will both parties deliver on what each promised? Was either party tailed to the meet? Is anyone going to crack under the stress and fire off a shot? You have to understand Mr. Johnson's perspective in all of this. He might not be a saint, but the Johnson is just doing business. Shadowrunners are seen as killers and drugged-up psychopaths who love nothing more than sticking it to the man by murdering a Johnson. SINless savages, really. Unpredictable. As a shadowrunner, you need to learn to use your unpredictability to your advantage. Mr. Johnson should never be comfortable around you—but neither should it seem obvious to him you plan on killing him, because you can bet your hoop he's going to act first.

I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS

Despite my advice, or perhaps because you didn't follow it, you find yourself betrayed by Mr. Johnson. Oh, woe is you, life is so unfair, *alles ist kaput*. Take a deep breath. Don't panic. There are ways to come out of this, and even ways to come out ahead.

First, let's look at the ways it can all go sideways. We already talked about Mr. Johnson deciding he doesn't want to pay you, or thinking everything might be much simpler if you're dead. The third option is that you were hired for a suicide run. Perhaps as a distraction while a second team did the real work, perhaps you were meant to get in, do the job, but getting out was not part of the plan. Maybe you're not supposed to die—just get caught with your hand in the bag and set up as the fall guy.

If you are either lucky or really good, you might see the betrayal coming. If that happens, well, simply walking away from the job might be an option. But you shadowrunners tend to be headstrong, so walking away probably isn't your style. No, you probably want to have your cake and eat it too. That's fine. What you need to do now is concentrate on Mr. Johnson. You need to tail him. You need to find out *why* he's going to betray you.

If it's just for personal greed—he wants to keep the money for himself and thinks he can get away with it—then you need to get leverage on him. You need to figure out what he fears. It might be physical threat. Many Johnsons have solid bodyguard teams and feel pretty invincible. Show him you can reach him wherever you want, whenever you want.

If bodily harm doesn't scare him, damage to his reputation might. In this case, we're talking blackmail material. Almost every single Mr. Johnson is hiding something from his employer. They almost all embezzle in one way or another on the side, or are scheming some move to put them ahead of their bosses or allies. Get some dirt and let him know you have it. I don't recommend messing with loved ones, though; that's crossing the line.

- What, are we getting sentimental all of a sudden?
- Balladeer

- Maybe he is, maybe he isn't, but there truly *is* a line. Going after someone's family will negatively affect your reputation in some circles. Though it may also mark you as a sort of cold don't-frag-with-me kind of guy, which some Johnsons may see as an asset.
- Cosmo

Most likely, though, you just won't see it coming until the guns are drawn, things look pretty bad, and you're wondering how things go so fucked. Stay cool. First of all, between capture and death, always pick capture. Live to fight another day. Sure, things might be unpleasant for you for a while, but you'll get over it. In case you don't know, few shadowrunners ever do jail time. Typically you will instead be forced into service for your captor. That's not so bad. Heck, you might make new friends. But it's just so ingrained in your "stick it to the man" shadowrunner mentality never to back down that most runner teams get themselves gunned down rather than getting captured. This is almost certainly what your betrayer is counting on. As soon as you're in a setup, do everything in your power to be unpredictable. Of course, all that being said, if you've got the firepower to blow out of the ambush, then by all means, do so. I'm not advocating laying down arms at the first sign of trouble. Just know your limits.

If you get jumped at the meet by Mr. Johnson's own men, then stage a fighting retreat as quickly as possible. As a rule, Johnsons are cunning. If he is attacking you, you can bet he made sure he'd win. So get the fuck out. You are in an environment he controls. This will not end well. Retreat. Accept you won't see your money for a while, maybe not ever. Don't die on top of it.

After you survive the initial betrayal, it's time to think about making things right. You should put your emotions (especially your street samurai's emotions) aside for a moment. Your first priority is getting paid. This may still be possible. For a lot of Johnsons, this is nothing personal. It's a sort of game, really. So if you want money, you need to get leverage. I said you needed leverage at the handoff meeting; maybe you didn't have that last time. Now, make sure you do. Get something of value

from Mr. Johnson and sell it back to him. Note that this can be his life. Be careful how you do this. This is like a game of chess for Johnsons. Often you just need to let them know you have them in checkmate. Don't go further than you need to, even if it would make you feel really, really good. Avoid physical violence if possible. Oh, at this point, magic of any sort is totally allowed. If you can get in sight of Mr. Johnson and cast an Influence spell to suggest it'd just be such a good idea if he transferred you the funds he owed you, then go ahead my friends. You can *finally* let the mojo sling to your little black heart's content.

If you can't get the Johnson to pay you what he owes you, then consider salvaging what you can. Once you've been betrayed, your reputation really won't take a hit here no matter what you do. So if you can sell out Mr. Johnson to his enemies for a little cred, go ahead. If you can sell secrets you learned during the course of the job to an info broker, go ahead. Sell whatever you have on the Johnson and this job. The loyalty and silence the shadow community expects from you is no longer in effect. Do what you gotta do.

If all else fails, you can try to salvage some emotional capital and flat-out go for revenge. If you're going to do this, get your objective straight. You either want money or you want blood—you can't have both. So if you decide that you're gonna gut Mr. Johnson, then don't listen to the deal he will inevitably lay in front of you. If you manage to slice through the Johnson's security and you're holding a gun to his head, you can expect him to start talking nuyen. And, in most cases, it's a real offer. Johnsons have access to funds pretty much at all times, so when he says he'll give you ten thousand nuyen if you walk away now and let him live, this is probably a serious offer. If you do decide to take it, all members of your team need to be on the same page. First of all, Mr. Johnson isn't going to give you any money until he feels he is out of danger. This almost certainly means you will be exposing yourself to additional security measures, so for this to work, your team needs to be in position to cover all angles. The Johnson has to feel safe enough that, once he gives you the money, you won't just kill him anyway, but not so safe that he thinks he no longer needs to pay you anything to escape. It's a difficult balancing act. Second, you and your team must control your emotions, because if you accept the last-minute payout, it is no longer kosher to kill him on top of the money. If you do, the shadows will judge you. This is because it is true that, if you aren't paid, it's fair game for you to retaliate in whatever way you want. But if you accept money, then that needs to be the end of it. You kill a Johnson that paid you—even if it was under duress—then it's all over for you. The rules of our community can seem odd and arbitrary sometimes, but you need to know how you will be judged, and there is no sense arguing with them. This is simply a fact of life. It's not fair, but that's how it is.

That being said, it's okay if you pistol-whip the slag once or twice.

GAME INFORMATION: MR. JOHNSON AND NOTORIETY

As noted in the Notoriety section (p. 372, *SR5*), "Insulting or otherwise pissing off a Johnson" can earn you some Notoriety. Johnsons are an arbitrary bunch who play by an odd set of rules. As all Johnsons are unique individuals who take more or less offense to various things, the gamemaster is the ultimate judge of whether the runners broke any rules of the shadows and Mr. Johnson took offense. However, the following things are generally considered unprofessional and will earn runners a bad reputation:

- Being noticed using Manipulation magic under normal circumstances
- Showing up at a meet heavily armed in an environment that doesn't warrant it
- Being caught hacking the Johnson's commlink under normal circumstances (keeping in mind that, unless the log is erased, this can happen some time after the fact)
- Killing a Johnson who paid you

JOHNSON GENESIS

I've alluded to the fact Johnsons come from a few broad backgrounds that determine, to some degree, how they will act and react. Before I get into the details of each, a word of warning. Every Mr. Johnson, no matter his background, is an individual. To expect every Johnson to conform exactly to the stereotype of his background is foolish and potentially deadly. It's good to come in armed with some understanding of what is important to these types of Johnsons. It is stupidity not to observe your Johnsons, do your research, and adapt to what is in front of you. You've been warned.

MEGACORPORATE

Let us begin with the people who invented shadowrunning: corporate Johnsons. More specifically, mega-corporate Johnsons, meaning people who work for at least AA-sized corps. Going back to our definition of Mr. Johnson, we said this was anyone that gave you work. In most of the other groups, Mr. Johnson is an incidental role. The person has some other occupation—he merely becomes your Johnson due to the fact he has a need that came up in his sphere of responsibility, and you're the solution.

In megacorporations, Johnsons are typically profes-

sionals exclusively devoted to hiring and dealing with shadowruns and shadowrunners. They do nothing else. They are honed professionals who live for what they do. Most have no lives outside of work, typically working eleven or twelve hours a day, every day. You can't get a degree in Johnsonning, however, so most of these people started out their careers as lawyers, project managers, consultants, or (of course) as military or security officers.

- Consultants?
- /dev/grrl

- Yes. You'd be surprised how that life can turn you into an amoral fanged killing machine.
- Kia

At some point somewhere, they are identified as prime Johnson material and trained into that role. Universally, only top performers get drafted as Johnsons. If you thought becoming Mr. Johnson was a thing that happened to shamed employees, think again. Johnsons are vital to the megas, and the work they do is very demanding. Meeting with runners is only one part of their jobs. Corporate Johnsons have a lot of responsibility in terms of planning ops, forecasting scenarios, and absorbing a non-stop flow of information regarding rivals, on top of networking with their peers and all manner of shadowy figures. These guys often take a lot of designer drugs to stay on top of their game. Combine that with the alpha personalities and complete lack of moral compass, and these are some of the most dangerous individuals in the world.

Each megacorporation has its own unique culture, so each Johnson is going to be influenced by that to a big degree. However, they all have in common their razor-edge alpha personalities and exacting standard. It is very unwise to fail a mission when you're playing at this level. Megas pay better than most other employers because they expect more from their resources. You're going to need to be resourceful and persistent in your efforts. If things go badly, you need to keep at it. If someone on your team dies or gets seriously injured in the course of the mission, you have to be ready to keep going.

The megas have no shortage of work, so if you do well, you will get called back again and again. For some runners, this is actually a dangerous thing. You people value your freedom so much, you do really stupid things sometimes. But if I'm laying down the cards as they are, it is definitely a concern for many teams to become too attached to corporate Johnsons. This can make them seem like company men. Sometimes it's more than perception, of course. Corporations love sure things. They love to bind sure things into contracts. If you do well in the corporate sphere, it is indeed quite possible you'll get an offer to become company men. You'll be paid a nice retainer (for those not use to corporate payment scheme, let me translate: You'll be paid good money to sit on your ass), have steady work, and most likely have access to preferred gear. Unfortunately, a lot of your kind consider this to be selling out to the man. Which is crap that shouldn't matter to anyone, but we all have our priorities, I guess. It can make things harder for you in the shadows, as some of your contacts can become suspicious of just how far you will go to please your corporate bosses. Would you sell them out? That's really all it boils down to.

Corporate Johnsons love spending the corporation's money, so these are the guys you're going to meet in fancy restaurants and the VIP booth of the more exclusive clubs. This serves several purposes. First, it puts you in your place. It's a display of his power. If he'll blow this kind of nuyen just to meet you, imagine what he'll do if you cross him. Second, Johnsons love their creature comforts, so it is a perk of the job for them to enjoy these lavish outings. Lastly, Johnsons piggy-back on the establishment's security. The AAA-security rating of those downtown places, or the club's detail-oriented security staff, enhance Mr. Johnson's own protection team, all while he enjoys a blowjob from the joygirl under the table.

With corporate Johnsons, you always have to worry about the politics going on behind the scenes. Johnsons do all the hiring and they manage you, sure. But the idea of the run doesn't come from them. They are merely employees doing their job. They pay you, but it's not their money. This means the real stakeholder of the mission isn't just Mr. Johnson. If at all possible, you'll want to find out who is behind all this, or at least get a sense of who it might be, because you'll need to read the situation. This goes back to my earlier points about preventing a double-cross of some sort. You could consider this a sort of advanced technique for shadowrunners, because finding out this kind of stuff isn't easy. Johnsons will always do everything they can to obfuscate who they really work for, often even hiding what corporation they work for. Tracing the links back to the source is not easy; it can also greatly annoy Mr. Johnson, so be discreet. A certain amount of fact-checking is expected, but invading your Johnson's commlink (and getting caught) might very well get you fired.

BIG TEN JOHNSONS

Every corporation in the world strives to have its own unique culture. Corporate culture is both planned as well as naturally occurring among employees. For the largest corporations in the world—the Big 10, the AAA status corporations—corporate culture is so pervasive that it affects everyone and everything, even operators with both feet firmly in the shadows. Corporate Johnsons all reflect the culture of the corporation they belong to—to a degree. Again, never for a second think Johnsons are going to be cookie-cutter examples of their corporation's culture. The influence is going to be there, but each Mr. Johnson may take it in their own direction.

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY

Ares continues to enjoy a mostly good reputation among shadowrunners, though recent events regarding the Excalibur fiasco and hints that it was only the exposed tip of a vast iceberg of problems at the heart of the corp have stirred the shadows somewhat. More than any other corp, Ares tends to recruit its Johnsons from military and security officers. Don't expect a drill sergeant-esque personality, though. Rigidity has no place in the shadows. Expect rather crafty out-of-the-box thinkers without a concept of morality. Everything is just a figure for them. Ares tends to offer payment in kind a lot. Most runners would obviously equate that to otherwise hard-to-get milspec gear, but little lifestyle perks from Ares Entertainment don't hurt either.

Be wary, though—Ares Johnsons know they have a good rep, so they know teams won't expect betrayal. They will use that to its fullest advantage if the situation requires it.

AZTECHNOLOGY

The exact opposite of Ares, Aztechnology suffers from the worst reputation in the shadows of all the corps. To be fair, this stems from their overall agenda, which can only be described as a plan to dominate or destroy the world, rather than their individual dealings with runners. If you can look past Aztechnology's agenda, they are excellent employers (though they have the unfortunate habit of trying to pay in Aztechnology scrip. Just tell them no and continue with your negotiations). They typically provide a lot of assistance to teams and offer fair to generous payment. Azzie Johnsons do have a tendency to hide their affiliation, though. In such a case they'll mimic the employment conditions of other corporations.

EVO CORPORATION

Evo Johnsons have an interesting paranoid slant. They are very peculiar about maintaining top security and privacy for meets—every meet, any meet, no matter how big or little the job. They like wide-open spaces outside the city, with a particular fondness for meeting on boats in the middle of the ocean. Evo Johnsons are usually metahumans, and they try to play up their "friendliness" to metas. However, they'll hire anyone. You don't need to even have any metas. Heck, you can even be an overt racist. If you'll take nuyen and do the job, they'll just shrug and get on with it.

Evo Johnsons typically offer cash as payment but are well known to willingly switch to cyber or bioware payments, complete with access to medical facilities for installation.

HORIZON

If you expect your Horizon Johnsons to meet you in a nova-hot club wearing clothes it would take you several runs to pay off, well, you are probably right. Horizon Johnsons are amped-up motherfraggers high on all sorts of drugs (mostly novacoke), but don't let that fool you. They cycle damn fast, so they are under a lot of stress, but they are also the best and brightest of their peers. Horizon is great to work with because their Johnsons consider the whole op to be run as a single team, not an "us-versus-you" thing. Your Horizon Mr. Johnson pretty much doubles as a fixer as well. Whatever you need, they will try to facilitate you getting. They will take your run feedback into consideration and may alter the run based on what you think and what you suggest. They are irritatingly team-oriented.

The underlying bogeyman behind all this, though, is the Dawkins Group. In my opinion, there are no worse people on the planet, because they don't *kill* people. They *erase* them. They convince people to give up everything they believe in. It's not that they make people sell their souls. They make people think their souls have so little value that *they* need to pay Horizon for doing the gracious deed of accepting to take their souls off their hands. When you have manipulative bastards like that hanging in the background, things can get dicey. Heck, Horizon Johnsons hate dealing with Dawkins, because these guys can absolutely destroy anyone with very little effort and no remorse. I tell you, in this business, nobody likes Dawkins. So if those guys get involved in your run, or God forbid, take an interest in you ... well, good luck, chummer. If anyone asks, we never met.

MITSUHAMA COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

Working with MCT Johnsons is likely to be an experience you won't forget. Mitsuhama Johnsons are insanely precise and methodical. They will usually have your entire run planned out already—maps, covers, weapon caches, vehicles—everything. Their demand will be that you follow it to the T. Some teams enjoy this, as it cuts out the legwork, but many teams are incredibly wary of so totally putting their lives in the hands of someone not going in under the gun with them. In addition, MCT Johnsons expect complete success. If you fail, do not expect any payment. They won't ask for it, but they'll also expect you to refund any advance you may have taken. Doing this *may* avert the kill squad they'll be sending to put a bullet in your head. MCT Johnsons are very all-or-nothing kind of guys. On the other hand, they pay exceedingly well.

Note that there is a distinction between doing a run directly for a Mitsuhama Johnson versus doing a run for the Yakuza on behalf of MCT. The corporation feeds the syndicate a lot of jobs they don't want to bother with. In that case, the modus operandi will not be as described here, nor will the payment be as rich. But if you're dealing directly with an MCT Johnson, you are definitely in the big leagues and better bring your A-game.

NEONET

NeoNET Johnsons are probably the most hard-to-peg lot. That is probably because, really, NeoNET does not exist. You're either dealing with Novatech, Erika, or Transys. Heck, there is even some ancient Fuchi stuff in there, too. So really, without a central corporate culture, you can hardly expect Johnsons to share a lot in common.

NeoNET Johnsons form a sort of web of secret agents. While there is a lot of competition between them to raise the best team, Johnsons delight in showing off their ponies by lending them out to their colleagues. So if you feel like a used whore being swapped around at an orgy, you're working for NeoNET. This international coterie of back-channel Johnsons, set up by the legendary (and now CFD-afflicted) Miles Lanier, works better and smoother than official NeoNET channels and exists under a parallel sort of leadership. This is actually beneficial to runners, as Johnsons know a lot of stuff they aren't supposed to know. They are as wary as you are of the "official" NeoNET. Thankfully, this translates into NeoNET having a very low ratio of betrayal since Johnsons are out to build reliable teams first and foremost. However, do expect to be shipped around the globe.

RENRAKU COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Renraku Johnsons crave stability. The corp prizes company suits over other types of teams. If you've never worked for Renraku, or are into your second or third run, then you are being tested. If you do well, you will receive an offer to be put on retainer. That's how Renraku works. They scout for talented teams and then buy them lock, stock, and barrel. You can refuse, of course, but if they like you, they are going to *insist* you drink the Kool-Aid.

If you do, it's not a bad life. Your income gets a little more predictable and you gain access to toys a lot more easily. Most company teams get attached to one particular Johnson, who you will get to know pretty well. In many cases your bond is more to your Johnson than to the corp. I know of many teams that were cut loose when their Johnson died or otherwise stopped being a Johnson. But as always, beware of politics. Johnsons sometimes make internal enemies, and your Johnson's enemies will most likely be your enemies as well. Your symbiotic relationship with your Johnson may demand more loyalty than you anticipated.

Finally, a word of caution. The Red Samurai *hate* company suits. The Samurai consider themselves to be the pinnacle of honor and guardians of the company. Frankly, they are very jealous of company suits. They are the wife, and you are the girlfriend. Renraku knows about the rivalry, but lets it occur as part of their culture, hoping the competitiveness brings out the best on both sides. But if you are doing any joint ops with the Red Samurai, watch your back.

SAEDER-KRUPP

Like Aztechnology, Saeder-Krupp likes to play the misdirection game. Most S-K Johnsons don't advertise themselves as such. What's worse, S-K missions tend to be rather odd. They don't go for the same kind of jobs you'll pull with other corps. S-K Johnsons are pretty good as disguising themselves. They'll present themselves as mob guys, other corps, or even amateur scientists. Whatever it takes to get you off the trail. Saeder-Krupp Johnsons are usually picked from people who have field experience and can take care of themselves. You'll get adepts, mages, and people with discreet, lethal, and top-of-the-line cyber. Of all the corporations, Saeder-Krupp Johnsons get left by themselves a lot, both in terms of security and just what the hell is going on. S-K Johnsons quickly learn to stop trying to figure any reason behind the missions they are tasked to resolve.

The exception to the above is of course the bogeyman of the shadows, Hans Brackhaus. A sort of legendary figure, Mr. Brackhaus has most likely been played by many actors. The commonality between all of them is that if Hans Brackhaus is looking to hire you, your life is about to get complicated. All I can say is "good luck."

S-K Johnsons are very demanding. Success brings rich rewards and the occasional offer to become company suits. It's a good gig if you can get it, but failure for servants of Lofwyr always comes with a heavy price.

SHIAWASE CORPORATION

Working for Shiawase means working for the Marketing & Intelligence Forecast Division (MIFD). This is the world's biggest information-sucking machine. Having tons of information is one thing, and pretty common nowadays. Being able to use that info is a whole other story. The MIFD are the leading authority in Big Data search algorithms and making sense of it all. Your Johnson is almost certainly an MIFD guy, and you're just a piece of data.

Shiawase operatives are *not* subtle. They don't try to hide who they are, because if they did they would suck at it. These guys are expected to be examples of corporate culture, and they don't disappoints. Stiff backs, no sense of humor, and Bushido all the way. You are expected to show loyalty and honor in all things you do. Bushido does not permit surrender or defeat, so don't expect your Johnsons to be adaptable when problems arise.

Working for Shiawase may seem a little dry at first, but it has benefits. Work is steady and well-thought-out. If you can get some sort of rapport with your Johnson, try asking to be paid in information. Johnsons don't do this at first, but if you prove yourself—and your honor—a little, they might feed you some stuff that can really matter.

WUXING INCORPORATED

You'll know you're doing a Wuxing job if there are not one, but two Wuxing Johnsons at your meet. Wuxing Johnsons always work in pairs, and at least one is going to be Awakened. I've made a point of telling you never to use magic in a meet, and especially not manipulation spells—well, Wuxing Johnsons break that rule. *They* will use magic on *you*. They typically limit the intrusion to Analyze Truth, but still, be aware this is going to happen and stay frosty.

Wuxing Johnsons typically have ties to the Triads and like to meet in Triad-owned bars or locations such as dockyards, but any spot near power sites attracts Wuxing Johnsons like moths to a candle.

Wuxing pays the least among the megas (which is still pretty good payment relative to other types of jobs), though one of the best types of payment you can ask for is to have you or your team smuggled somewhere. With their extensive shipping and logistics operations, Wuxing can arrange for items or people to travel from one place to another with little fuss. Great way to disappear when the heat turns on. Wuxing's association with the Triads can also work out for you, so consider that as well.

SYNDICATE

Ah, criminal syndicates. The people that lacked sufficient business acumen to become megacorps. They are certainly big players in the shadows. So, here I'm talking Mafia, Yakuza, Seoulpa Rings, Triads, Vory, as well as smaller regionally important outfits, and then possibly some of the larger international gangs like The Ancients and that ilk.

Even more so than corporations, syndicates strongly encourage a certain kind of mentality within their organizations. Traditions, cultures ... prejudice. This makes syndicate Johnsons a tad more stereotypical than corporate Johnsons, so use that to your advantage. Almost all criminal syndicates are racist and prejudiced in some way. These are organizations that strongly require a certain sense of fascism among their members and cultural insularity. Kind of stupid, but make sure you're up to speed on these things. Having a female mage try to negotiate the run with a Mafia traditionalist is a very poor idea. Make sure you know what their biases are and use them to your advantage. Or, at the minimum, make sure you don't have a disadvantage.

Syndicate Johnsons are very often much closer to the source of the run than corporate Johnsons. You'll rarely deal with the big boss himself, because you pretty much become big boss by making sure other people dirty their hands for you, but very often you'll be dealing with the number two guy. The title varies—Consigliere, Wakagashira, Lodge Master, etc.—but it's always the same thing. The number two guy runs the day-to-day operations. The lowest it will typically go is the layer of bosses below that.

These guys typically can't—and don't want to—hide their identities very well when hiring you, so figuring out the picture behind the job tends to be easier, so long as you are knowledgeable in underworld politics or have contacts that are. This should help you read the job and figure out what's really going on.

This is especially important with syndicates. For corporations, it makes sense to hire outside deniable assets. The corps don't want to get their name dirty and, in many cases, can't or don't want to expand their in-house elite black operatives. But for syndicates it is very different. Syndicates make their living doing illegal stuff. They are stocked to the gills with guys that will do and kill anything they are told to, and for very little money on top of that. So, why outsource? This is always what you need to ask yourself when dealing with syndicates, and the answer is usually messy.

Most syndicate jobs that require shadowrunners tend to have a tricky political element to them. More plainly, someone needs to hide something dirty from someone else. Guys making moves for themselves are common, or syndicates that wish to strike out at each other but aren't ready for war. If you're lucky, you'll get hired for something as simple as the fact they need your skillset. Syndicates have tons of goons, but precise black-ops teams with physical, Matrix, and magical assets are a bit rarer. Very frequently, though, you're helping someone climb the ladder up over the corpse of his boss. Be very wary about these types of jobs. If it works out, you'll have a new friend in a position of power. If it doesn't, though, you probably have a date with some cement boots in the near future. Oh, and by the way—syndicates are really good at finding shadowrunners. They live in the same muck you do and know the same type of people.

On that subject, I think syndicates are the second most likely group to decide that the best course of action is to liquidate you after a run, whether you succeed or fail (we'll talk about the holders of the number one spot on that list in just a minute). Syndicates do extremely illegal things but have survived as organizations because they do everything imaginable to obfuscate their traces so the law can't touch them in any truly damaging way. One of the best ways to cut an evidence trail between the crime and the boss who ordered it is to simply kill everyone who knows anything about it. They constantly do this with their own people—I hope you don't think they will feel in any way shy about doing it to you. Do your background checks and figure out what's going on. Above all, always keep leverage on syndicate Johnsons. Make sure they can't torture crucial information—or your strong sense of will—out of you.

Syndicates are bullies. The only way to rise to the top is to be more ruthless, more aggressive, and scarier than everyone around you. Syndicate Johnsons understand violence. It permeates their culture. You *must* show respect to them, like gorillas deferring to the alpha

male. If you don't show respect, then maybe you don't fear them. And if you don't fear them, you're a trigger pull away from taking their place. This is how they think. So it is very important you don't give them a reason to suspect you think you are better than them, because out of pure self-preservation, they will need to put you down. Similarly, violence is part of how they communicate. Syndicate Johnsons love showing you examples of what happens to people who fail them. If you find yourself in a Lodge Master's abode and there is a guy being skinned alive next to you, don't be surprised. They are just setting expectations.

Again, you can use this to your advantage. Bullies universally go away and whimper in a corner when they meet a bigger badass than they are. They are used to picking on the weak and disabled; they aren't used to being hit back. Don't let your syndicate Johnson dominate you. You are not one of his goons, and you need to show him that. You need to growl back twice as hard and hit back twice as hard. But you also need to make it clear you aren't interested in taking what belongs to the Johnson. This is unusual to them, so you will have to establish that messing with you isn't worth the effort, but that he doesn't need to preemptively kill you.

On the more agreeable side of things, organized crime Johnsons love to reel you in with a little bit of sugar. Many syndicate Johnsons, especially following the conclusion of business on the first meet, will invite you to indulge in some vices. Girls or boys, drugs, liquor, and everything in between. A little taste of the good life to get your buy-in, or, even better, get you hooked and dependent. I know you shadowrunners love your sex, drugs, and rock and roll, but try to indulge in moderation. Nothing is ever free, chummers.

Whatever you do, though, never think you have friends in a syndicate. It's *always* the guy you least expect that is going to come for you.

MAJOR SYNDICATES

There are a lot of organized crime outfits, in which we count the major "ethnic" groups but also lots of top-ti-

er gangs. Further, within these large bodies, there is a lot of variation in culture. There's almost always a "progressive" splinter and a more "conservative" faction, so it always pays off to know which group Mr. Johnson belongs to. Syndicate Johnsons are typically a little less anonymous than corporate ones, so getting your Johnson's rap sheet and knowing how he treated past shadowrunners is going to be easier. Be sure to take advantage of that.

MAFIA

The Cosa Nostra is a very wide and diverse group, more than most other syndicates. What started out as an Italian thing is really now a Jewish, Irish, Polish, Black, and so on thing. The common thread is respect. You must always show respect to Mafia Johnsons. It's part of their rules. Any disrespect *must* be punished.

Mafioso Johnsons typically don't have too much of a problem with working with shadowrunners. They are another bunch that are pleasant to meet, as good alcohol is usually offered. Mafia Johnsons like to meet in places they control, often restaurants, bars, or gambling clubs, though this can extend to less-friendly places like the docks or alleys in their territory. Don't read too much into the choice of places. If they want you dead, they're equally likely do it in any of these locations. Short of that, the mob typically pays what it promises, so not getting paid is rarely a concern. They'll either pay you fully or kill you.

YAKUZA

Yakuza Johnsons are the ones who have the most trouble working with runners. They don't like dishonorable scum like you, and unless you're an all-Japanese-human-male team, they're frequently going to have issues with at least some of you. They don't like women, they don't like *gaijin,* and they certainly don't like metahumans.

Despite all that, it hardly means you won't be doing jobs for the Yaks. The Yakuza are some of the world's finest hypocrites. They'll break all the rules they insist make them so superior, and to do so they'll use the worst scum they can find: you.

Yakuza Johnsons are unpleasant. They don't like being near you. They are the kind of guys who will invite you to meet somewhere nice, but you won't be sampling any of the delights; they will be for Mr. Johnson, helping him compensate for the nastiness he has to suffer through. They will get to business quickly and plainly. They'll assume you are idiots so will keep it simple. Don't ask too many questions, that just prolongs how long he has to suffer your presence, so he'll cut it short and tell you to do your homework. Unpleasant people, I told you.

That being said, the Yakuza have their claws in a lot of corporations, through extortion and blackmail. They leverage those contacts to get a lot of inside info, so runs often have a little help from the inside. The Yaks pay well enough, but they like to pay in kind, especially in vices, though you can sometimes get cyberware, hacking gear, weapons, that sort of stuff.

TRIADS

Working for the Triads is typically pretty straightforward. They don't have an opinion about shadowrunners one way or another. Johnsons are typically older gentlemen and ladies, so don't expect too much excitement in your meets. They are, however, infuriatingly superstitious and talk in metaphors way too much. The Triads will often be pairing you with some of their own muscle as backup or diversion, as needed.

Don't expect to become a regular of your Triad Johnson. You are not one of them and never will be. You don't understand. They'll use you purely as mercenaries, and you'll never be one of their favorites or whatever. It's a cold life working for the Triads.

Also, a word of caution. If you need to cross them for some reason, payback *will* come using magic. You'd better find a nice, warded place and plan to stay there for the rest of your life.

VORY

The Vory v Zakone are a tough bunch. They'll take a beating and keep on ticking. Vory rely on shadowrunners more than the other criminal outfits. They are probably alone in not feeling superior to you. You're not Vory, no, you're still an outsider, but so long as you deliver on what you are tasked, then you are just swell in their opinion.

Make no mistake, Vory Johnsons are the epitome of violent men. You don't need to treat them special, but you do need to be effective, to deliver, and never ever cost them money. The Vory only know one way to solve problems: kill everyone you know, knew, or might possibly get to know in spectacularly bloody fashion as they work their way to you. They are cold, cold people whose smiles never quite thaw the ice in their eyes.

Vory Johnsons are very pragmatic. Whatever works, whatever you need to do, is fine by them if it doesn't screw up their work. Whatever they can do to assist, they'll do, for a certain charge. Good people to work for, so long as you aren't looking to make friends (if you are, you're in the wrong business anyway).

EXTREMISTS

Extremists ... now we're getting to the fun part. Extremists are terrorist groups—very much including eco-terrorist—as well as insurgents, freedom fighters, rebels, but also secret societies, political organizations, magical groups. All of those kinds of people. Anyone who believes in something. Anyone who values, above all else, something other than nuyen. God, these people make me sick.

Extremist organization Mr. Johnsons are almost always the bosses who call the shots. This is because most of these group work in cell structures where the less members know, the better. So, really, nobody but the top guy of a local "cell" or whatever they call themselves (sometimes it's "chapter" or "parish") knows anything at all about the big picture going on, so really nobody would know you need to be hired. That means that in order to talk to anyone who can do anything, you have to talk to the boss.

Extremists do fund quite a lot of shadow work. The reason is often very straightforward: they need your skillset. Extremists often have a lot of members very much willing to break the law and/or hurt unbelievers, but what good qualities these people bring to the table in terms of enthusiasm, they cancel out by lacking in skill. If we're talking about armed groups—terrorist and the like—then the jobs are often pretty straightforward with little political aspect to it. These guys need you as mercenaries to supplement their forces and reach where they can't, plain and simple.

However, it is the very opposite with nominally unarmed groups such as secret societies and policlubs. Because they often want to present themselves as peace-loving, perfectly rational and law-abiding people, they need to secretly hire you to do the real dirty work that is the entire point of their existence. The classic example is Humanis, an organization that goes to great length to present itself as "not anti-metahuman but pro-human," hiring you to go and burn down an orphanage for ork children.

While these two halves have different reasons for hiring you, they unfortunately have a similar tendency to think it's a great idea to kill you when you're done. These guys are amazing at rationalizing murder away and for the most part have little concept of long-term consequences and reputation in the shadows. As soon as they don't need you, there is a strong tendency for them to eradicate you. Most likely, you are an unbeliever to their cause anyway, so you're just another unclean they need to burn in their crusade sooner or later anyway, right? Now is as good a time as any to kill you.

So, above all other Johnson types, be real careful about what work you accept from these crazies. The covenant that binds us all together—reputation—doesn't matter to these people. They will promise you mountains of gold when all they have is ten UCAS Dollars in their pocket. They will lie to you about everything—anything to get you to do the job. And then when you're done, simple math comes up. Do they need you again? If yes, then you're okay. If not, then it's really a question of how many casualties they will take taking you out. Note that I'm not saying "if" they will take casualties, but "how many." Throwing away the lives of trusting believers is what these guys do best. Losing a dozen to kill four or five runners isn't a big deal—assuming their supply of loyal underlings is holding up adequately.

Given that they care nothing about honoring agreements and care only if they have a future need for you, how do you make sure you get paid? Obviously, make yourself indispensable. Show your potential for The Cause. You can easily do this by going beyond the parameters of the mission. Hired to burn down an orphanage for orks? Then burn it down and then burn down the nearby school mostly attended by orks. And, of course, make sure there are plenty of orks in those buildings when you burn them down. Then get video footage of orks begging for their lives as you watch them burn and give it to your Johnson when you come for the handoff. He'll like that. If you work for extremists, then you need to be all in. If you show that you're one of them, then they will trust you. Trusted mercenaries are hard to come by, so you've just made yourself useful. And by showing the same insane bias these people have, whatever it may be, then you're showing that your loyalties lie with the group. So if you get arrested, you won't talk. That's good. They like that.

But, whatever you do, do not be an obstacle. Do not suddenly grow a conscience and decide you don't want to complete the job. Do not act disgusted at their hidden hatred. If you meet them, you're on their radar now. Extremist group are paranoid—very paranoid. Mostly they have reason to be so, as governmental and corporate spy agencies and law-enforcement agencies like to keep tabs on them. If they'll smoke you for simply not being all in, imagine what they'll do to you if they think you're actively against them. You just went from having an employer to having an enemy hunting you down.

All in all, if you ask me, you have to be pretty desperate to work for extremist groups. But I understand sometimes you just have to pay the bills. If you play your cards right, though, there is no reason you can't prosper. Whether you can sleep at night after what these guys ask you to do is another matter.

- Not all causes are morally bankrupt. Sometimes working with those with a cause just means understanding you need to push harder because there is more than nuyen at stake.
- Marcos

- Chummer, there ain't ever nothing more than nuyen at stake.
- Matt Wrath

EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

HUMANIS

Working for Humanis isn't as bad as you might think. They aren't going to get you to line up and execute a bunch of metas. That's not their style. You'll probably be doing datasteals, surveillance, planting evidence, that sort of thing. Humanis is about convincing people metahumans are bad, not slowly executing the lot of them one by one. While I'm sure they wouldn't mind that happening, the upper echelons try to be subtle.

Speaking of the leaders, your Humanis Johnson isn't going to be some toothless hick. It'll probably be some rich guy's assistant. He will think very highly of himself, but even more highly of his boss, the guy funding your run. They have no qualms hiring metahumans, by the way. They can't resist the smug satisfaction of being proven right that metahumans are criminals and scum. Plus, if you get caught, it'll just show everyone else that metahumans are nasty little thugs and thieves.

Humanis are pretty middle-ground employers. Pay is decent, but no real perks beyond that, and an average chance to get betrayed. Humanis Johnsons tend to be lazy, and they like hiring the same teams over and over so long as nothing goes dramatically bad.

ILLUMINATES OF THE NEW DAWN

Well, this is going to be a shocker, but your IoND Mr. Johnson is going to be a smug fascist hermetic mage. Sorry to have to break it to you. He is going to be a little hoarder of secrets and act very self-important. If you can deal with that, you can probably do business. The IoND is not just looking for mage runners. They have plenty of mages. What they often need is some good old street muscle and techies like riggers and hackers.

I may deride them a little, but I won't deny Illuminate Johnsons are smart bastards. They will have a very good plan to get you to your objective. However, this plan will most likely rely too much on magic and human manipulation: the two things they understand really well. It'll be a little light on making use of hacking and good old violence, because they don't know how to use these tools effectively. I suggest you evaluate the plan and inject what you know. You'll probably offend your Johnson, but he'll eventually come around. Deep down, they know you are better at doing this than they are.

The Illuminates have a reputation for being rich. Don't believe it. They don't pay that well. However, if you need secrets, they have that in spades. Blackmail dirt, who is doing what to whom, what various people are planning, all kinds of info a shadowrunner might find useful. Also, any hermetics on your team will be grateful to be paid in the kind of arcane items they have lying around, but they will *never* give out the really good stuff.

NEO-ANARCHISTS

The little brats of the world have a natural affinity for shadowrunners, and vice-versa. You two get along like soykaf and Styrofoam cups. The Neo-As never have a shortage of need for qualified shadowrunners, because their own people are typically idealist dreamers who can't actually get anything done. The equation is very simple when working with Neo-As. You have next to no chance of getting betrayed, but you also will get the poorest pay you've ever laid eyes on. But they at least have pretty much every contact people of your kind might need. Street docs, hacker software and hardware supplies, weapons, safehouses ... everything.

AMATEURS

The final category is a broad one—the amateurs. Amateurs are people who do not normally operate in the shadows at all. These are people who really don't know shadowrunners and don't have a clue about the rules of the game they just stepped in. Some examples of amateurs are the scientist who personally hires you to sabotage a rival's project, the rich mage guy who wants you to retrieve a rare artifact, or the parents who hire you to find their daughter who disappeared in the Barrens (invariably, she ends up being an insect shaman, but that's another story).

Amateurs aren't dangerous per se. They lack the means to kill you for whatever reason. The mad scientist might try to kill you once you acquire that thingamajig, but it'll typically be a silly, over-elaborate plan that you just sidestep pretty easily. I mean, these people haven't ever killed anyone before. They don't know how it's really done. They don't know actual shadowrunners, just what they saw on the trid or the secondhand stories they overheard.

The tradeoff to the safety of dealing with amateurs, and possibly the good karma you get for helping someone who really desperately needs your help, is that the pay is shit. A few personally rich assholes aside, few amateurs have the thousands of nuyen it takes to properly compensate runners for their time. You'll typically get some cash and then maybe something really precious to the person, like a family heirloom or something. I know two types of runners who take amateur jobs—the ones who end up refusing most of the payment, and the ones who milk Mr. Johnson dry.

You're either the type that is going to see those poor parents cry their eyes out when you tell them you had to put down their insect shaman daughter for the good of humanity and then feel really bad, thinking they've been through enough, and accept a few hundred bucks (if anything) and leave it at that. Or you're the type that's going to do the job as an excuse to come back and extort everything these people have simply because you can. I mean, your beefy muscled cyberarm is the size of that schmuck's torso and your handgun is the size of his head. Is he going to say no? If they were dumb enough to invite you into their home, then you're going to clean them out. Easily justified considering even after you rob them—excuse me, "accept due payment"—tomorrow they go back to their plush corporate lives, and within a few years they'll have rebuilt their life savings. You? Tomorrow you're waking up in a slum and risking your life for another job, and the odds of you being alive in ten years are slim to none. So get paid while you can.

Assuming you actually decide to go through the motions of accepting the amateur Johnson's job, be aware that the intel they will have on the job is going to be worthless. They'll either know nothing, or the intel is going to be so biased with wishful thinking that relying on it would be extremely hazardous to your health. (Example: "Our good little girl has gone missing! She is helpless, please save her!" No—she is an insect shaman, not a good little girl.)

All things considered, amateur Johnsons require some patience, but it can be a nice change of scenery. You might get a feel-good factor from doing these jobs, which I'll grant can probably be nice every now and then, though that will directly correspond to a serious decrease in cash payment. Or, go for the other side of the coin and realize amateurs are easy marks for you to milk for very little effort or consequence. By definition, they have no experience in the shadows—therefore no contacts they can use. So whatever you do, it's unlikely your reputation will be affected since nobody is going to hear about it. I mean, your conscience, if you have one, will know, but that's your business.

A DUMP OF ONE'S OWN

Kat o' Nine Tales scanned the AR views of properties while drinking a mimosa at the Millennium Hotel in L.A. The once-glorious homes of the rich and famous sit in front of her, strewn across the water like shells in the sand. Artificial and Twin-created islands made finding specific locations more of a challenge, especially when using mapsofts from before the quakes. As she flips the ethereal page of the virtual book, the walls and trid reacts to her selection. Pointing to one of the pages, a great chandelier manifests above Kat's head and a ghostly spiral staircase emerges out of the wall. She stands up to look around.

Not too shabby, lots of space and an upstairs, she thinks.

With one step forward, the room quickly shifts to the outside. Rubble from nearby homes is piled on the grey, lumpy lawn. Ocean salt and pollution from the Twins killed several large palm and black oak trees on either side of the driveway. Turning to look at the front of the place, Kat nearly chokes on the mimosa as all the windows have covered up.

"Probably with projectors to avoid the view," she signs, then scans down the floating AR window, looking for a price. She finds one, then shakes her head. "Ignorance is bliss, but not at that price."

She flips to the next one and the room changes again. Colored light now projects from a beautiful stained-glass window above a balcony connected to twin staircases of reclaimed hardwood. She turns around to admire the architecture. No art on the walls and more functional lighting, but somehow the lighting of the place appeals to her. Another step forward and the traditional lawn appears to have been replaced with polished stone and sand-sculpted landscape with large column stones to represent trees. It's a style she finds appealing. Another step and she is to the edge of the island. Santa Monica is just on the horizon. There's a cliff edge about five or six meters high, and someone has put in a floating dock and carved in a few steps. She looks at another AR window, reading that it's apparently a reclaimed home, so the price has been marked down significantly. Kat schedules an appointment today to go see the place and then closes the program. The room reverts to the eggshell white emptiness as she steps out on the balcony to imagine the new residence.

Four hours later, with the Santa Anna breeze blowing across the ocean, she reaches the island. Her dress flaps in the wind as she reaches the top of the steps, but as she walks the natural path, the wind turns into a breeze, tempered by the stone trees.

"Another plus for the place, but I doubt it has any sort of plumbing or drinkable water," she whispers looking around.

The house looked pretty good when she approached it. The paint has faded with the sun and ocean spray, but the windows and roofing appear to be intact. A digital voice on the door says "Welcome! Please come in—the realtor will arrive shortly."

She opens the door and steps in. An oriental rug lies in the middle of the foyer allowing the light from the stained-glass window to dance upon it. Walking over to the rug, she smiles at the artistic play of light. But the brief smile vanishes as she finds that her feet can't move from the rug.

"Ah, yes. Beautiful work. I modeled it after your fourth album cover," says a familiar voice.

Kat turns to see a rather pale man in the same yellow tweed jacket, rolling a small ball at her feet. She tries to pulls out her pistol and finds that her arms are weak and sluggish. Realizing the futile gesture, she smiles, "Larry? I thought you were dead. I see you have some new toys."

"Yes, Kat, I had to relocate after a falling out with certain customers, but I found a great place here. Isolated properties and all that. My new clients offer a variety of toys to procure product for them. The immobility will end soon, so we'll have to cut the formalities short. I'm glad you found this place, though."

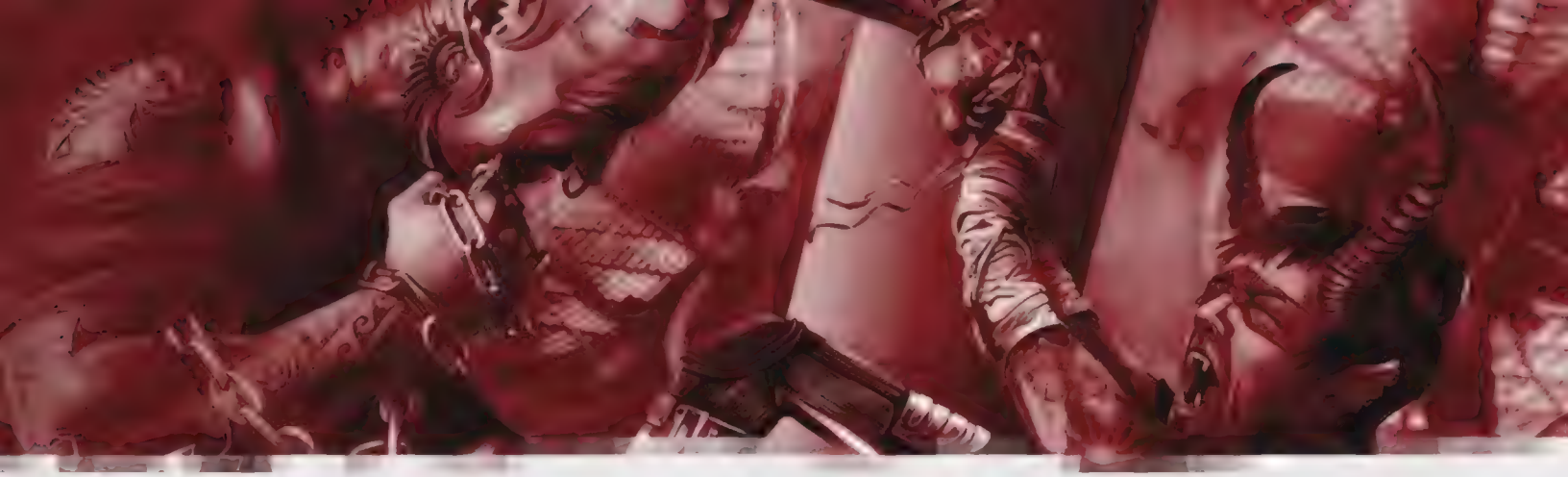
"I'm not staying long."

"Indeed you're not." He approaches her with a long syringe, "I have shipments to fulfill and parts don't stay fresh."

"What I should have said, Larry, is that I'm not here looking for a place for myself. Some of Kane's boys are wanting a safehouse for the summer, and I owed Kane a favor. Isn't that right Scrimshaw?"

The front door is pushed open. Ducking through the doorway is a very weathered troll, whose arms wrinkle with muscle augmentation. "Aye, mum," he answers. Behind him are more people, partially obscured by Scrimshaw's frame.

Kat sits down to wait for the spell to expire while she watches Larry grow even paler. "Larry, why don't you negotiate the price with Scrimshaw, while the rest of the crew checks the place out. I'll just sit here and enjoy the view."



WHAT'S IN A LIFESTYLE?

BY /DEV/GRRL

While I initially was forced into a discussion on safehouses and bolt holes a few years ago, I've found the subject interesting and have continued to think more about how we all live. Some of us have a house to go to, some are not so lucky, while others prefer hotels or living out of their car. Besides the physical aspect of a lifestyle, I asked myself, what else is there? As a community of shadowrunners, are there common forms of entertainment? Security? Paranoid habits? So in a more philosophical approach, I present a discussion about what's in a lifestyle. Fastjack, this one is for you.

The first question is, what is a lifestyle? Simple—it's how you live on a day-to-day basis, and is normally broken into socio/economic classes (Street, Low, Medium, Luxury, etc.). So the follow-up question is, what are the elements of a lifestyle? We can break a lifestyle down into a few elements. I count seven parts to a lifestyle: Comforts, Necessities, Security, Neighborhood, Entertainment, Services, and Assets. While a lifestyle should include work, we all know what we do for a living, so we'll leave that out for now.

COMFORTS

A comfort is something that gets you out of the elements and protects you from the cold, extreme heat, rain, or snow that may be raging outside. Hypothermia, heat stroke, sepsis, poisoning, and infection are risks that can occur in if we're outside too much, but these are mitigated by modern conveniences of housing. In our lovely world, urban temperatures tend to run two or three degrees warmer than those in nearby rural areas. Smog and acid rain are a constant reminder of how we screwed up the world. The world can be cruel; have you been denied a decent apartment, because you don't have a SIN to validate your existence? So does what you do cause you to live with minimum comforts, or do you do what you do to gain more comforts? What I've seen is once you have some cash, a fake SIN is a necessity to get a dump of one's own for almost everyone. How many of us support two different places of "comfort" (using the term loosely)? One for the comfortable SINner, the other a hole-in-the-wall for the shadowrunner personality?

- Hypothermia can set in, even in warmer climates. Walking around in fog-wet clothes in Seattle when it's around 15 Celsius can potentially lead to death in an hour. I've seen it happen in the Underground when people try to get out of the rain.
- Bull

- There's always room in the Barrens, if you don't mind the neighbors.
- Slamm-0!

- Coffin motels are fine if you run light, but they can be hard on relationships. Living from hotel to motel doesn't allow you to personalize a place for yourself, and you have to suffer through any problems that exist in the room (bad heating, leaks, no AC, etc.).
- Kat o' Nine Tales

- A bullet to the brainpan would also ruin a relationship. A coffin motel is easy to walk away from when the shit hits the fan. They allow something reasonably close to anonymity.
- Clockwork

Everyone also needs a place to sleep. This can be difficult when you have to be wary of someone shanking you in the middle of the night for your shoes. With sleep deprivation, a runner can make mistakes or become slower to react. In this business, slow reaction equals death. So what do you do to achieve some semblance of adequate rest?

- Get cyberware. You only need half your brain to function.
- DangerSensei

- That's too easy an opening. Who needs sleep? LongHaul can keep you alert 'til you get where you're supposed to be, and then some.
- Turbo Bunny

NECESSITIES

Food and water—or in some people's cases, whiskey and a smoke—are daily necessities, not only to survive, but to properly live. Potable water is scarce, even for urban dwellers. Contractual obligations of various water treatment and reclamation plants give preferential treatment to corporate premises first. In non-corporate areas, water quality, while within legal standards, leaves much to be desired.

- The water tastes fine, just don't leave it next to an open flame or drink it before a drug test.
- Traveler Jones

- A drug test? Who do you work for, nuns?
- Haze

- Travel Tip #8: Water can contain germs. Whiskey kills even those germs in a glass. That's how you keep from having Montezuma's revenge in a foreign country. Even the pilgrims gave their kids light beer to drink!
- Kane

- And you wonder why you don't get to babysit without supervision?
- Slamm-0!

<UPLOADING INITIATION #1>

Hi, I'm Otto Clutch,

I was told that I needed to give a little lifestyle background before I'm allowed access to the forum, so here it is.

I take two-liter bottles to the municipal steam-filtered water plant ten clicks outside of Redmond, in Kirkland. It's one of the few cheap places to get potable water. I am one of the many SINless faces surviving in the barrens. I look threatening enough to get a few square meters of floor space at an old auto dealership and repair shop. I'm not the only one here, so I keep my stuff locked in the car and a Predator under my pillow. At least the garage is big enough for all of us to get out of the rain and vehicles out of sight. It's not much, but it's better than living on the street or in the car. The dealership has restrooms, but it's a manual flush without running water. There's no power, therefore no heat, or air conditioning anywhere. We've made do with a few scavenged batteries to power fans or heaters. Entertainment is whatever you can find on the public grid with your commlink or what's playing at the local bar. We're all here for mutual protection, or at least a deterrent by numbers. We also share what can be scrounged up to keep everyone's wheels running. We all have a fear of being without a working vehicle, as that's our escape route if things go south.

Food most likely is greyscale soy paste and a bottle of the flavor of the day. An apple is out of the price range of most shadowrunners. So do you suffer the same cold meal every day, do you eat out to have some semblance of the real thing, or have you added assets to your lifestyle that help you get a little taste of something better?

- Cricket hatcheries are a big hit in Cal-Free. Doesn't take much to keep them growing. Fry them up and they make a great traveling snack. If you don't have a soy processor, sprinkle them in a bowl of soy and pretend they're nuts.
- Kat o' NineTales

SECURITY

Security covers a broad sense of how much a deterrent your place is to unwanted guests and criminal activities (other than your own). Those living on the street can only protect what they can hold on to; others up the lifestyle chain have a physical location that can store and protect them rather than have it on their back all the time. Security can be further divided into astral, physical, and Matrix security, though mainly we're talking physical security, unless you're a magician capable of putting up wards and calling up spirits or are rich as Villiers and have your own grid.

- There are magicians who can provide ritual services to protect a home. A bit expensive and has to be renewed on a monthly basis, but available. See Sanchez in Seattle if you have to deal with spirits and have no magic protection of your own.
- Ma'Fan

- Faraday cage wallpaper and throwback hard lines can keep nearby technomancers out of your business.
- Clockwork

NEIGHBORHOOD

Lone Star has categorized the various neighborhoods based on security coverage. From AAA to Z, each rating represents the security investment in the area, with AAA being the most secure and Z being, well, "fend for yourself." Their motivations for making those investments depend on the various premises and, if there are corporate assets, what the corporation is willing to pay outside their own territorial security. So where do you hang your hat? Are you a Barrens Brat or a Corporate one? Do you just find a place to park your car and sleep in it like a possessive rigger, or do you look for a motel vacancy?

- When I'm down on my luck, I just drive around 'til I find a good alley or a secluded parking lot to park in. For paranoia's sake, you have to put some countermeasures around the area.
- Turbo Bunny

<UPLOADING INITIATION #2>

Not sure why this question is on here, but here goes. I'm Geoduck, by day, just a low-end wageslave supporting other wageslaves. I do an average job with minimum hours so as not to show up on anyone's radar. To them, I'm just a cook for Soylicious in Tacoma, and I'm good at it. I really am a culinary expert, but I won't waste my talents at this point on the corporation.

I do this because when I come home, I'm not worried about some drug addict ransacking my place for something to sell. I have a bed to sleep in, good food to eat, a garage, even a backyard. I can BBQ with the neighbors; hell, there's a group of us who go to the virtual gun range every other Friday. Granted the whole place is under the control of the corporation, but they don't see everything. If I don't bring "work" home with me, I'm okay and the corporation is none the wiser. Good enough for you, /dev/grrl?

ENTERTAINMENT

When you are not sneaking through corporate halls or shooting people in the face for money, there are places you see and people you hang out with during downtime. Do you hang out a bar? Do you relax listening to a live orchestra? Do you have season tickets to watch a sports team? How do you relax? Some people are social and hang out with others, some are anti-social and play video games or some other RPG, and then there are some like Kane.

- Now why am I being singled out here? I'm an ordinary guy. I prefer gambling, womanizing, driving fast cars, boats, jets, and blowing shit up. Explosions are more of a hobby. I've gotten pretty good in shaping a blast; kinda like fireworks, but with more kick.
- Kane

SERVICES

As part of your lifestyle, do you have your clothes dry-cleaned? Do you subscribe to a grid? There are many tasks that we can hire others to do for discreet purposes or to maintain a perception of "normalcy," but which ones can you afford? Do they work under the table to provide their talents to the SINless masses or do they conduct a shadow business?

- Besides shadow banking that can launder corporate scrip and certified credsticks, I have a no-questions-asked laundry service that will patch up bullet holes and clean blood stains
- Pistons

- Four Point Delivery Services. Weapons and other gear delivered to Pacific Rim destinations. They are on the Matrix if you've forgotten to bring something when you get to your destination.
- Red Anya

ASSETS

Your house is not just where you eat and sleep, it's where you clean your gun, study magic, and maybe cook a little hooch. Assets are the tangible things that you can access. To everyone I've had to work with, access to showers are a *must*. It's not your reputation that precedes you; it's your three-day binge after the last paycheck. Another must is a nearby laundromat. Wearing dried blood to a meet-up can very easily send the wrong kind of message.

- A sanctum of peace where one resolves internal conflict is also useful for those in our line of business.
- Man-of-Many-Names

- Not to crash /dev/grrl's work, but I'd like to throw in a few comments on fashion relating to lifestyle.

  1. You will be treated as you appear. Try to blend in when you want to be invisible. Try to clash when you want attention. Try to be as ostentatious as possible when you want people to remember the clothing and not the person in them.

  2. Never assume. That guy sleeping in the gutter in the beat-up lined coat drinking from a paper bag? Maybe he's a street sam waiting for an excuse to show you his cyber enhancements and martial skills as he beats you into the ground.
- Plan 9

- Or he's just a bum.
- Pistons

- Who is a contact of an enemy and is being paid to watch and report on who goes in and out of a building.
- Plan 9

Bolt holes and safehouses are common parts of a shadowrunner's life. I've covered this before, but let's sum up briefly: Bolt holes are prearranged, cash-only paid spaces that you crawl into when the shit hits the fan. Bolt holes are usually set up in advance and then left to sit in whatever dark, unseen place they inhabit. A bolt hole isn't some vacation home in the Bahamas—it's more likely a cargo crate with food rations, a chemical toilet, and nothing but time on your hands to contemplate your sins and what to do next. A few people may share a bolt hole, but they might kill each other if they stay confined too long.

A safehouse is much like what you see in the trids. A little out-of-the way home used on a temporary basis to keep people safe as they are moved out of the city/country or just until business is taken care of. Corporations and governments use them for witness protection or to offer them to shadowrunners to babysit assets. A safehouse is generally a step up from a bolt hole. In that they tend to be controlled by some House Master/Madame who maintains whatever operating façade the safe house has constructed.

GAME INFORMATION

Presented here are optional rules for gamemasters and players to use to add more depth and playability to a character's lifestyle. A lifestyle is divided into four categories: Comforts & Necessities (C&N), Security (S), Neighborhood (N), and Entertainment (E).

Each lifestyle has preset levels for these four categories, plus a set of points that can be spent to raise individual levels or buy entertainment options. Lifestyle categories cannot be lowered (unless, of course, you switch to a lower lifestyle level). Each lifestyle also has a category limit, listed in brackets next to the base level. The category cannot be raised higher than this limit. The Entertainment category does not have a level. Instead of being used to raise the level, points can be used to buy specific entertainment options (p. 219). Not all the points for each lifestyle need to be spent—each point can raise the monthly cost of the lifestyle, so players have to consider the benefits they get and the costs of gaining them. Each point spent on Comforts & Necessities, Security, or Neighborhood increases the Lifestyle cost by ten percent of the base lifestyle. Points spent in the Entertainment category vary in cost; depending on the associated lifestyle, they may not bring in additional costs (see **Entertainment**, p. 219, as well as the information for each category).

Lifestyle options (p. 224) can be taken to get more points for the lifestyle or reduce one or more categories. The negative options cannot reduce the level of a category below 0; if an option would do that, it cannot be selected. A lifestyle can gain up to twice the starting lifestyle points when taking lifestyle options. Some positive options can increase the limit; this is noted with each option. Additionally, some lifestyles come with lifestyle options already included. These are noted in the lifestyle descriptions below.

BOLT HOLE

Living the Bolt Hole lifestyle is not pretty. A bolt hole is a space away from everything (people, grid, entertainment), and most often you're stuck in it for a while because you need to stay out of sight. Add 4 to the threshold of any test involving someone trying to track a character who is living la vida Bolt Hole. In the Entertainment category, assets can be bought for a Bolt Hole, but not services or outings (see p. 219). Bolt holes only have a monthly cost when used. The char-

FASHION BY LIFESTYLE

There are certain styles of clothes that come with each lifestyle; for each month of lifestyle purchased, characters get one set of clothes. If they want more, they have to buy them separately. If the character wants to make an impression or go slumming, they should purchase clothing that matches that lifestyle. There is also a social stigma of not dressing the part. When you are going to an interview with Mr. Johnson, you should be wearing clothes at the same social level as Mr. Johnson or at least the same level as the locale where you are meeting him. Most often, Mr. Johnson meets at some high-class restaurant while he is dressed for success. The gamemaster may opt to impose a dice-pool penalty depending on how far the team's dress is from where it should be.

Robin and her merry gang have just gotten their first meet with Mr. Johnson at a posh restaurant. Robin puts on her special little black dress made with real silk (Luxury class). As she arrives, she finds that her gang must have come from a combat biker rally, as they are wearing faux-black leather and smelling of cheap smokes and sweat. So as to not cause embarrassment (her little gang would have penalized her negotiations, leaving her to explain to Mr. Johnson that they really are professionals and/or apologize), she threatens them all with bodily harm if they don't go home and come back clean and properly attired.

STREET AND SQUATTER

Vendingwear is a cheap option for people looking for modest covering, and if you have a Street or Squatter lifestyle, that's what you get. Vendingwear is recycled plastic that is shredded and woven into fabric (with an elastic band for pants, socks, and underwear). It has no options except for color (avocado green or dirt brown) and size (small, medium, large, and extra-large). Many people who live on the street turn in bottles or old vendingwear to get new clothes. Prices range from 1 to 20 nuyen.

LOW

Besides thrift stores selling cast-off clothes of the middle class, Beaux Retail (Mitsuhama) has simple casual (20 nuyen) to business (100 nuyen) clothing made from industrial polymers and put together by the cheapest labor available. Kong Walmart has many affordable knockoff brands. Prices range from 20 to 150 nuyen.

MEDIUM

For business, you can go as high as Wellington Bros (Shiawase Fashion); for casual wear, Vashon Island (Shiawase Fashion) and Victory (Ares) won't break the bank. Prices range from 150 to 500 nuyen.

HIGH

A High lifestyle can always default to the original Très Chic Clothing (Aztechnology) for business or casual wear. Optionally there's also a more Old World look with RhineGold (Saeder-Krupp) or Styling wearing KoGo (Wuxing). Prices range from 500 to 1,000 nuyen.

LUXURY

Designer clothes are a must for people living the Luxury lifestyle. This includes designs from artists such as Berwick (Mortimer of London), Armanté (Zoë), and Jean-Paul. Prices range from 1,000 to 5,000 nuyen.

acter pays for the whole month, even if he used it for a day, or even just a few hours (though if you only need to hide for a few hours, use a no-tell motel already).

- Comforts & Necessities: 1[2]
- Security: 1[4]
- Neighborhood: 1[4]
- Points: 4
- Built-in option: Not A Home
- Cost: 1,000 ¥

STREET

See category description on p. 373, *SR5*. In this category, increased levels in the Comforts & Necessities, Security, and Neighborhood categories result in a flat increase of 50 nuyen per level per month. Entertainments come with their normal listed costs, but any assets or services the player wants to purchase must be approved by the gamemaster, as they would have to be usable/accessible by the general public.

- Comforts & Necessities: 0[1]
- Security: 0[1]
- Neighborhood: 0[1]
- Points: 2
- Cost: 0¥ a month

SQUATTER

See category description on p. 373, *SR5*.

- Comforts & Necessities: 1[2]
- Security: 1[2]
- Neighborhood: 1[2]
- Points: 2
- Cost: 500 ¥ a month

LOW

See category description on p. 373, *SR5*.

- Comforts & Necessities: 2[3]
- Security: 2[3]
- Neighborhood: 2[3]
- Points: 3
- Cost: 2,000 ¥ a month

MEDIUM

See category description on p. 373, *SR5*.

- Comforts & Necessities: 3[4]
- Security: 3[4]
- Neighborhood: 4[5]
- Points: 4
- Cost: 5,000 ¥ a month

HIGH

See category description on p. 373, *SR5*.

- Comforts & Necessities: 4[6]
- Security: 4[6]
- Neighborhood: 5[6]
- Points: 6
- Cost: 10,000 ¥ a month

LUXURY

See category description on p. 373, *SR5*.

- Comforts & Necessities: 5[7]
- Security: 5[8]
- Neighborhood: 5[7]
- Points: 12
- Cost: 100,000 ¥ a month

TRAVELER (1D6 + 2 POINTS)

The traveler keeps mobile and packs light. Every month the traveler stays someplace new, often settling by chance. He may end up at a discounted honeymoon suite one month then a coffin motel the next. The player rolls 1D6 to determine the number of points allocated to the lifestyle for that month. The player can spend points to Comforts, Security, or Necessities. The rest of the premise is designed by gamemaster, including what Entertainment is or is not available. In the Entertainment category, only assets and services are added by the gamemaster, and they do not add to the cost of the lifestyle as they are provided by the establishment.

- Comforts & Necessities: 2[4]
- Security: 2[4]
- Neighborhood: 2[4]
- Points: 1D6 + 2
- Cost: 3,000 ¥ a month

COMMERCIAL

This lifestyle is a storefront, not a proper residence to live in. The lifestyle includes a location where the character can manufacture, fence, or repair goods. The location associated with this lifestyle includes permits to sell specific legal items. Because it's a business that can make money, the monthly cost can vary. When renting an establishment, the character should make a Charisma + Etiquette (Corporate) [Social] test at the start of each month. Each net hit reduces the monthly cost by 1,000 for that month, representing the savvy business sense the character has while running the establishment.

- Comforts & Necessities: 3[4]
- Security: 3[7]
- Neighborhood: 4[6]
- Points: 4
- Cost: 8,000 ¥ a month

LIFESTYLE CATEGORIES

COMFORTS & NECESSITIES

Comforts & Necessities are an integral part of any lifestyle. If a shadowrunner doesn't get a good night's rest and a belly full of nutrient-added soy, he'll eventually end up at the morgue. This is because of the possibility of fatigue damage (p. 172, *SR5*). At the beginning of most game sessions, characters roll to resist fatigue damage, simulating how much rest they have been able to get in their quarters. Characters do not, however, have to make this roll if the new session directly continues an adventure from the previous one and they have not had a chance to rest in whatever domicile is part of their lifestyle. Base Fatigue damage that characters must resist is 6S. For each level in the Comforts & Necessities category, reduce the DV by 2.

Additional factors may affect the damage the character must resist. For example, having allergies can be a hassle, especially food allergies where choices are limited. Allergies to things found in the environment (such as pollution, ultraviolet rays, plastic, etc.) increase the Fatigue damage characters must resist by 1 per level above mild for common allergies and 1 per level above moderate for uncommon allergies if the Comforts & Necessities category of the lifestyle is level three or lower. Allergies to foods can be problematic, as some special dietary requirements may not be available in all

lifestyles. Allergies to common foodstuffs (soy, mycoprotein, etc.) also increase the fatigue damage value by 1 per level above mild if the Comforts & Necessities category of the lifestyle is level 3 or lower. For uncommon allergies, the damage value increases by 1 if the allergy is Severe, 2 if it is Extreme.

EXAMPLE

Sad Sam lives on the street and has a severe allergy to soy and a moderate allergy to pollution. Every day he gets up coughing and red eyed from the pollution irritating his sinuses and nauseated from the soy snacks he was able to scrounge up. The Street lifestyle has 0 levels in Comforts & Necessities, meaning Sam has the full 6S worth of Fatigue damage to resist. On top of that, the moderate allergy to pollution adds one more point to the damage value, and the severe soy allergy adds 2 more. That means he has to resist 9S prior to starting the game session. And people wonder why Sam is always sad.

SECURITY

Security covers a broad sense of how much a deterrent your place is to unwanted guests and criminal activities other than your own. Those living on the street can only protect what they can hold on to, while people higher up the lifestyle food chain have a physical location that can store and protect their stuff, rather than having to carry it all around with them all the time. Each point into security reduces the risk of theft of the character's stuff at home. The exact details of when this comes into play are left up to the gamemaster, but one example is a Security Test representing how well the place is watched by security officers, alarms, and other security measures. If anyone attempts a burglary at the character's domicile while the character is away, roll a dice pool of (Security level x 2) against the Sneaking + Agility of the burglars. If the Security wins the test, security officers have noticed the attempt, or a home alarm has been triggered, or some other event has occurred to indicate that the burglars ran afoul of the security measures without the player having to do a thing. For reference to various aspects of security besides being armed and dangerous, see p. 355, *SR5*.

The gamemaster should also look at the rare items the character owns compared to the security of the lifestyle. If the item's Availability is more than twice the Security level, chances are someone/thing will notice the item and want to steal it. The greater the discrepancy, the more likely the item will be targeted.

The gamemaster is encouraged to decide and roleplay out such events, especially if it helps with the adventure/campaign. Alternatively, the gamemaster can abstract the potential for attempted theft with a test using a dice pool equal to the difference between the minimum Security level of a lifestyle required and the actual Security level purchased by the player. For each hit, the player must pay one percent of the monthly cost of the lifestyle to replace stolen goods or repair damaged properly (or pay insurance premiums that help them deal with such things). Nothing exceedingly valuable should go missing in this test. Burglary of a truly valuable item requires the Security Test detailed above.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhood is an abstract category covering what is acceptable behavior, safety, and general atmosphere. In the Sixth World, Neighborhood Zone classifications have been developed to give a quick snapshot of an area and the typical lifestyles in it. The Neighborhood Zone table lists those classifications. Between Neighborhood and Security, the gamemaster and player should be able to develop a clear picture of what a neighborhood feels and looks like, and the gamemaster can then flesh it out. For example, a character might find that the D Zone he's living in has been taken over by gangers or the Mafia when a made man knocks on the character's door asking for a cup of sugar substitute. The gamemaster should consider how well the character's activities and profession fit into the neighborhood. Guns and drugs in any zone below C may not make the neighbors blink an eye, but zone A or above, someone will probably say something. To avoid problems, the gamemaster could impose a higher lifestyle cost to account for the bribes the character has to pay to get people to look the other way.

ENTERTAINMENT

This category covers things that entertain, make life easier, and in general give the character things to do and people to see. Each of these perks has a monthly monetary cost and a point cost, as well as a minimum "no cost" lifestyle. If the player purchases a lifestyle that meets or is greater (in base expense) than the no cost lifestyle, then the element can be added without extra nuyen costs, though points must still be spent (the financial costs are assumed to be covered in the overall lifestyle expense). A minimum lifestyle of "None" means that no lifestyle can cover the cost of this item; if the player wants it, they need to pony up. Some entertainment choices bring advantages, listed in each description. Note that generally each item can only be purchased once per domicile, unless the description says otherwise. These advantages also cannot be used unless the character is actively using the domicile. If, for example, they are paying for an apartment in Seattle but out in Manhattan on a job, the items and advantages tied to the Seattle location do not apply. There are three types of Entertainments: Assets,

NEIGHBORHOOD ZONE

NEIGHBORHOOD	ZONE	RESPONSE TIME*	DESCRIPTION
0	Z	2D6 Hours	This is a lawless area deep in the heart of many barrens. Criminal organizations and gangs can sometimes feel uneasy here. Awakened critters and toxic spirits tend to roam wild. Unless it's a big incident, most security providers will find routes to avoid going through Z zones. Any type of residence can be found, though it will be in serious disrepair.
1	E	1D6 Hours	These are low-rent/industrial districts mostly filled with SINless squatters and the homeless. Heavy or toxic industrial facilities are included in E Zones. Security providers consider SINless "non-people" for the purposes of their work, which means if it's easier to solve a problem by shooting them, they will.
2	D	1D6 x 12 minutes	You can find these zones in the area between industrial and residential districts where the exposure to pollution is a little better than those who live right next to the smoke-churning factories. Or at least, that's what the residents will tell you. Patrols come through this area, only because it's inconvenient to go around. D zones can include run-down business district, abandoned warehouses, forgotten tenements, landfills, freeway junctions, old cemeteries, and large parking lots.
3	C	1D6 x 10 minutes	The district has seen better days and could use more than just a paint job to bring it up to snuff. You can find low-rent residences, storage facilities, small bodegas, and other similar sites in these zones.
4	B	1D6 x 5 minutes	This is where the middle class lives, along with the commercial places they use and the occasional light industrial facility.
5	A	2D6 +3 minutes	This features high-class residences and corporate buildings.
6	AA	1D6+4 minutes	Here you'll find luxury-class residences and posh commercial places. If you ask the price, you can't afford to live here.
7	AAA	1D6 minutes	Corporate headquarters. Skyraker condos. And the occasional private islands. This is where the world's wealthiest pay to make sure they're kept safe.

** This represents the amount of time it takes law enforcement, fire, and medical services to respond to emergency calls (note that medical response times might vary based on the services an individual is paying for).*

which are either physical characteristics of the domicile or facilities that are available nearby; Services, which are, well, services that the character can receive at home or in the neighborhood; and Outings, which represent opportunities in the neighborhood to go out and do things.

ARMORY

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 1,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: High

Quite popular among shadowrunners is a room dedicated to guns. Ammo and one stock firearm duplicating one that the character purchased at the character creation are on hand in this room. If the character has purchased a toolkit that can work on the particular weapon, 1 point of Accuracy or AP can be repaired per week without additional cost. A point of Reach can also be repaired in two weeks.

CLEANING SERVICE

Point Cost: 1
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: Special (see table)
Minimum Lifestyle: High

Cleaning services include tidying up the home and cleaning/mending clothes sent to them with some semblance of privacy guarantee. This service can be purchased several times for similar services such as landscape care, beauty salon/barber, and basic car

cleaning/maintenance. These services provide a reasonable amount of privacy. These services can also include some specific enhancements. Mage-sensitive services destroy biomaterials of the individual that may be left behind on clothing or in a car/premise. Any material link items found of the character at his domicile or in his vehicle are contaminated and cannot be used for ritual purposes. Pollution-sensitive services use less harsh chemicals and natural materials taking care of the character's clothes or cleaning the home. This reduces Fatigue damage from environmental allergies the C&I by 1.

CLEANING SERVICE TABLE

SERVICE	MONTHLY COST
Standard	100¥
Mage sensitive	200¥
Pollution sensitive	400¥

DISCREET CLEANING SERVICE

Point Cost: 4
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 10,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: None

You know of an organization that can go to a premise and patch bullet holes, wash out blood stains, and cleanse the astral in under twenty-four hours (as long as it's not a public or corporate place). At the listed cost, they will handle only one body disposal a month. If this limit is exceeded, the company may drop the character as a client. This service is tied to the character, so it does not end when they change lifestyles, as long as they keep paying the cost.

DISCREET DELIVERYMAN/ CANDYMAN

Point Cost: 3
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 100¥/1,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: None

You know a guy who can pick up and deliver any legal item (within reason) without being noticed to your domicile. It may be one of many bicycle couriers dashing over New York streets or a street urchin who can avoid many observers—either way, the delivery service is subtle enough to not be noticed by observers. The Discreet Deliveryman/Candyman has a dice pool of 14 for Sneaking Tests and an Edge Rating of 4. They only cover delivering an item—the purchase of the item must be accomplished through normal means. Time to deliver is based on original price of the item. While the deliveryman can handle takeout food service and legal items with an Availability of 8 or less, the candyman can handle items up to Availability of 16, as well as restricted and illegal items.

GARAGE

Point Cost: *
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: *
Minimum Lifestyle: *

A garage is a large covered area with enough space to park and maintain a single vehicle. With the purchase of a Shop (p. 443, *SR5*) related to the vehicle, 1 box of damage to the vehicle can be repaired per week without additional financial cost, as the cost is absorbed by the lifestyle. Purchasing a Facility increases the repair rate to 2 boxes of damage. Use the Build and Repair rules for quicker repairs (p.145, *SR5*, and p. 143, *Run & Gun*). This asset can be purchased more than once so that multiple vehicles can be serviced at the same time. The points cost, monthly nuyen cost, and minimum lifestyle depend on the nature of the vehicle, as listed in the table.

GARAGE TABLE

VEHICLE	POINTS	MONTHLY COST	MINIMUM LIFESTYLE
Airplane	4	20,000	Luxury
Boat	3	5,000	High*
Car (Body 4 or less)	1	50	Medium
Car (Body 5 or greater)	2	100	Medium
Helicopter	4	10,000	Luxury**

**Includes space on a dock and access to launch the craft. Smaller personal watercraft can be treated the same as cars for the purposes of storage and repair in lieu of owning a dock.*

***Includes access to a helicopter pad to launch the vehicle.*

GREENHOUSE

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 500¥
Minimum Lifestyle: High

Your home has a small plot of land or a couple of pots of dirt to grow carrots, tomatoes, herbs, wheatgrass, etc. to accentuate daily meals. Reduce the environmental damage due to food allergies by 1.

GRID SUBSCRIPTION

Point Cost: 1
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 50¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Middle

Nobody "downloads" or "records" their favorite song or movie any more. It's all based on subscriptions and purchases within the Matrix and stored virtually on a grid. Commlinks and home entertainment systems connect you wirelessly to everything from photos you've taken to corporate-sponsored lines of entertainment that you can watch whenever you want. Without a grid subscription, you might as well have a throwback commlink with an antique external storage device, as the public grid only has trid shows from like two seasons ago.

GYM

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 300¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Medium

Weights, treadmill, elliptical quadrilateral, gradient tricycle, or whatever device is trending. These devices help the character get physically fit, and they reduce the training time to improve physical stats by twenty percent.

INDOOR ARBORETUM

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 500¥
Minimum Lifestyle: High

An increasing number of domiciles have a room dedicated to living vegetation. For the Awakened, it's a bright spot in the astral plane. For the mundane, it's a room free of pollutants as the plants absorb them from the air. Having this asset reduces the Comforts & Necessities environmental damage due to pollution allergies by 1 point.

LOCAL BAR PATRON

Point Cost: 1
Type: Outing
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 25¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Low

You have a bar that you frequent where everybody knows you. Your lifestyle covers the food and drinks from this spot. You may get an occasional free drink there from your buddies. Similar habitual locations include restaurants and fast-food joints. One specific location is chosen when this entertainment option is selected, and the feature can be purchased more than once to add different locations.

MERCHANDISE: GOODS (SPECIFIC ITEM)

Point Cost: 1+
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 10,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Commercial

This location will provide some sort of legal goods for sale. The item to be sold must be selected when this option is purchased. The base Availability for the selected item is 3 for gear and low quality for miscellaneous items. For better quality or higher availability, more points must be spent to buy this service, with the maximum being 4 points to sell a luxury-quality item. Each point also adds 2 to the Availability of the item that can be sold on the premises. The character may pick up said item at a ten percent discount and reduce the interval on the Extended Test to locate the item by 1 category (days to hours, and hours to "it's on the shelf over there").

MERCHANDISE: PAWN SHOP/THRIFT STORE

Point Cost: 2
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 10,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Commercial

Any used legal goods can be fenced at this location. Items can be sold within a week provided that the player sells the item at fifteen percent of the normal purchase price.

MERCHANDISE: USED GOODS (SPECIFIC ITEM)

Point Cost: 2
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 10,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Commercial

This location can be used to fence one specific item, which must be selected when this option is purchased. When attempting to fence an item, reduce the threshold to find a buyer by half. Instead of negotiating a price, you can immediately sell items at twenty-five percent of the purchase price.

PANIC ROOM

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 1,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: High

This location has a reinforced room that goes beyond average material standards. It has a three-meter by three-meter room constructed with structural material (p. 197, *SR5*) with a Rating 5 locking mechanism.

PATRON OF THE ARTS

Point Cost: *
Type: Outing
Monthly Nuyen Cost: *
Minimum Lifestyle: *

Surprising as it seems, you can walk through the front door of some exclusive places, avoiding the line while other suckers have to stand there and buy tickets. Your membership privileges don't allow you to bring in weapons, but you receive preferred member treatment for perks like front-row seats, or "members only" specials, or and limited suite or luxury box access. This entertainment option covers places such as the zoo, Dante's Inferno, sports events, museum memberships, and more. The whole expense of the outing, including food and drink, is covered by the lifestyle. One specific entertainment venue is chosen each time this perk is purchased. The cost and nature of this perk varies based on the lifestyle to which it is attached. Virtual Disneyland and more upscale theme parks cost more monthly, as do private club memberships, and they tend to be bought by people with higher lifestyles. This choice can be purchased more than once for different locations, artists, sports teams, or what-have-you.

PATRON TABLE

TYPE	POINTS	MONTHLY COST	MINIMUM LIFESTYLE
Rock concerts / sport events	1	100	Medium
Private club memberships (Dante's, 77)	1	200¥	High
Public entertainment (zoo, museum)	1	75¥	Low
Theme parks (Virtual Disneyland)	1	100¥	Medium

PRIVATE ROOM

Point Cost: 1
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 20¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Squatter

This is a simple empty, two-meter-by-two-meter space that has been built out of the view of passers by. It provides concealability (-4 dice pool penalty for Perception Tests to notice a person in the room from the outside) and full cover. A barricaded alley or abandoned cars are examples things that could serve as a private room for people who do not live in an actual building. For people in a building, this is simply a room cleverly placed to be difficult to see.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Point Cost: 1
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 50¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Low

You have a monthly pass to access public transportation in your region. This can involve taking a bus, trolley, subway, ferry, or any combination of them. This means from most places within the city you have transportation access to your destination, with the caveat that it's not as fast as you may like it. This is purchased once per city, provided it has public transportation (good luck finding that in Chicago or barrens regions of other cities, such as Redmond in Seattle or Lambeth in London).

RAILWAY PASS

Point Cost: 1
Type: Service
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 75¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Medium

You have a monthly pass to use the light rail or maglev train to travel between two relatively close sprawls. This includes border-crossing fees when relevant (such as when traveling between the various sectors of Denver). This is purchased for two city locations, provided there is a railway connecting them. Examples of possible paired cities include Seattle and San Francisco, San Francisco and Los Angles, Cheyenne and Butte, and St. Louis and Chicago (the O'Hare sub-sprawl, specifically).

SHOOTING RANGE

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 500¥
Minimum Lifestyle: High

There's a place you can go where you can shoot guns and not bother the neighbors. Reduce training time with a firearm skill by ten percent.

SOY PROCESSING UNIT

Point Cost: 1
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 20¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Medium

You have a SOTA set of kitchen devices. Soy, krill, and mycoprotein are architecturally "printed" into something that looks and tastes like close to the real thing. Reduce the potential environmental damage tied to Comforts & Necessities due to food allergies by 1.

SPORTS COURT (SMALL) [SPORT]

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 300¥
Minimum Lifestyle: High

This gives the domicile a tennis court, basketball court, driving range, bowling alley, or something like that. The character has a physical place to play at home, saving the need to go out. This reduces training time with an athletics skill by ten percent.

SWIMMING POOL

Point Cost: 1
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 100¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Medium

You have every child's dream—a swimming pool in your home. It may not be a huge pool, but it's bigger than a bathtub, clean, and deep enough to use for relaxation and exercise.

WALK-IN FREEZER

Point Cost: 1
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 1,000¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Commercial

While this chilled room is mainly used for food storage, it can also store things that need to stay cold while six-foot holes are dug as more permanent resting places.

WORKSHOP/FACILITY

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 2,500¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Medium; must include Commercial

This is space dedicated to the character's gear-related work. Power, ventilation, shelving, etc. are there to perform any tasks related to working with an appropriate build and repair skill. Combined with a Shop or Facility, gear/weapons associated with the workshop can be repaired at 1 box of damage per week without additional cost (2 boxes with a Facility).

YARD

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 50¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Low

You have a piece of outdoor ground that you can consider your own. The lot is roughly fifty to two hundred square meters of empty space, depending on the lifestyle. This could be a backyard to a home, an empty lot, or abandoned parking lot. It's large enough to park a car, or put up a small kiddy pool, or install a ritual circle. This asset can be purchased more than once to increase the size of the yard.

ZEN DEN/BAT CAVE

Point Cost: 2
Type: Asset
Monthly Nuyen Cost: 100¥
Minimum Lifestyle: Medium

Everyone has to have a place to show off their cool stuff, a place where they are surrounded by things that are fun and comfortable. The zen den is a room dedicated to the hobbies of the character. It could be a physical collection of vintage bottles, a trideo set linked to megapulses worth of trid movies, an immersive sports-viewing room, or what-have-you. The zen den provides a +1 dice pool bonus on tests involving relevant Interest Knowledge Skills when the character is at home. The bat cave is similar, though geared more toward legwork. Tools, agent-driven computer simulations, and/or inspirational music provide a helpful atmosphere for the character in solving puzzles. With the purchase of a Kit related to a selected Academic Skill, the bat cave provides a +1 dice pool bonus to tests involving relevant Academic Knowledge Skills made while the character is at home. Separate Kits can be purchased for each Academic Skill, and the bat cave can hold up to three Kits.

LIFESTYLE OPTIONS

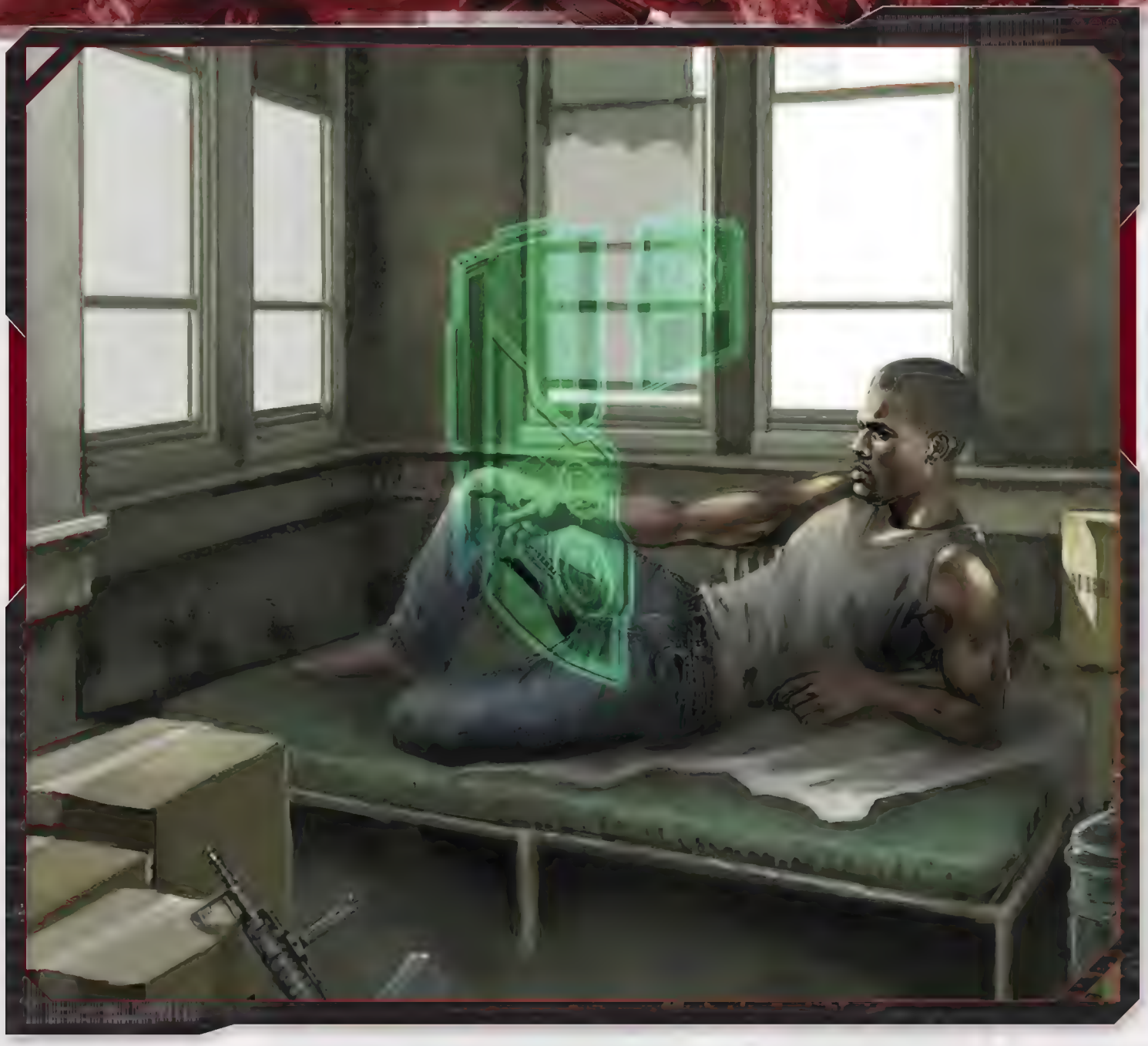
Lifestyle options generally cover the lifestyle as a whole. Positive lifestyle options can increase the limit of a category, while negative options give the player 1 point that can be spent on improving the lifestyle in any category up to the limit.

ANGRY DRUNK REPUTATION (NEGATIVE)

You have a bad reputation for causing or being in fights. This has caused many bars to put your picture in their system or ban you completely. The character cannot have any Bar Patron or Patron of the Arts (Private Club) entertainment options attached to any lifestyle, This option may cause issues for the character when meeting Mr. Johnson. Once the character gets away from the neighborhood where they live, though, they leave the bad reputation behind. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle associated with this quality.

CORPORATE OWNED (POSITIVE)

This domicile is within the jurisdiction of a corporation, such as a wageslave housing complex or arcology. Increase both the Comforts & Necessities value and limit of the location by 1. The Security level and limit are



also increased by 1 from the base lifestyle. Reduce the available points of the lifestyle by 3. If the base lifestyle doesn't have 3 points to start with, then it can't be corporate owned. To use this quality, characters must have a corporate or limited corporate SIN (p. 84, SR5).

CRAMPED (NEGATIVE, P. 370, SR5)

Applies to a single asset (Garage or Workshop). Can be purchased once for each asset, reducing its monthly cost by ten percent. Any tests performed in the cramped space have their Limit reduced by 2.

EXTRA SECURE (POSITIVE, P. 370, SR5)

There are no additional changes to this quality from the core rulebook. It covers all assets purchased for a lifestyle without additional cost.

HOTEL CALIFORNIA (NEGATIVE)

There's a limited window when someone can enter or leave the premises. The rest of the time, the character is stuck and can only use the resources the place has. The time period of lockdown should be agreed upon between the gamemaster and player and should not be too long lest the character become MIA while the rest of the team continue missions. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle.

MAID IS OUT (NEGATIVE)

This location has not been cleaned recently. Or ever. Layers of trash and mold cover most surfaces. Reduce the limit of Comforts &Necessities by 1. The Cleaning Service option cannot be purchased for this location. Increase the DV of environmental fatigue by 1 for environmental allergies. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle.

NOT A HOME (NEGATIVE)

This location was not designed for habitation. There's no plumbing and possibly no privacy, lacking standard features such as interior walls. This can be as simple as a cargo container or rented space at a strip mall. Reduce the limit of Comforts &Necessities by 1. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle.

OBSCURE/DIFFICULT TO FIND (NEGATIVE, P. 370, SR5)

Cannot have a Discreet Deliveryman or Candyman entertainment options attached to this lifestyle. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle.

ONE GOOD THING ABOUT THIS PLACE (POSITIVE)

No matter where the character ends up, he always has one entertainment choice guaranteed while he's there. With the selection of this option, the player chooses one entertainment asset worth either one or two points. This choice is always available at the domicile as long as the monthly cost is paid. This quality can only be tied to the Traveler lifestyle.

SAFEHOUSE (POSITIVE)

This premise is designated as a safehouse. As such, the character has no control over what Entertainment options are factored into the place, meaning they cannot purchase Entertainment assets for a safehouse, though other assets can be added. Subtract 4 from the dice pool of anyone trying to track the subject while they reside in a safehouse. The character can freely use the place, but the owner/director has rules that guests must obey while there. The gamemaster decides the house rules (curfew, weapons allowed, clothing restrictions, etc.). This option adds 500 nuyen a month to the cost of a lifestyle.

SAFETY THIRD (NEGATIVE)

While there is space for a workshop or facility on the premises, it's not the best of places to work in. In fact, there's always a risk to your health (for example, no ventilation, wet floor, critters). Reduce the number of 1s needed for a glitch by one (so that if the character would normally need four 1s to glitch, he now only needs three). Characters must have purchased a Shop or Facility along with the Garage or Workshop Asset. Applies to a single asset (Garage or Workshop). This quality can be taken more than once per asset. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle.

SPECIAL WORK AREA (POSITIVE, P. 370, SR5)

Applies to a single asset (Garage or Workshop). Can be purchased more than once per lifestyle. The 1,000 nuyen per month additional cost applies each time this is purchased, as does the +2 bonus to the Limit for relevant skill tests performed in the area.

THRIFTY (NEGATIVE)

So what if the shower is lukewarm and the walls are paper thin? You got a great deal on this place. Reduce the points available by 2 and the monthly cost by 1,000 nuyen. Only available for the traveler lifestyle.

W ZONE (NEGATIVE)

W Zone is sort of like a Z zone, but the W stands for wilderness. This location is way outside any urban area, so the grid is spotty, power is not publicly provided, and unless you have a car, you're walkin', as the nearest public transportation is two hours away. Reduce the Neighborhood level by 1 and increase the security response by 1d6 hours. Add 1 point to the base lifestyle.

MAINTAINING A LIFESTYLE

If a complete lifestyle, with all its additions, cannot be maintained, add-ons can be dropped, meaning that the character does not have to make the monthly payment for them. Assets have to be paid for in advance—if you don't pay for it at the beginning of the month, you don't get to use it for any part of that month.

If you drop an asset you had used points to purchase, the points are not returned. You can, however, resume payments in a future month and gain that option back. If you want to switch assets, simply buy a new lifestyle with the needed assets.

SAMPLE LOCATIONS

THE CUBE, TOKYO (COFFIN HOTEL)

Sure, the only space you can really call your own is a tube only slightly longer and wider than you are, but it's padded, warm, and dry, and you can lock it against intruders. Plus, food and bathroom facilities are available nearby. It's not luxurious, but it has the basic amenities you need to live, and sometimes they're even clean.

- Comforts & Necessities: 2
- Security: 2
- Neighborhood: 2
- Entertainment: 0
- Cost: 70¥ a night

THE MILLENNIUM, LOS ANGELES (STANDARD HOTEL)

For those times when you absolutely need to spend more in a night than many people pay for rent in a month, the Millennium is there for you. The mattress is pillow-topped, the furniture is real wood, and the staff is capable of acting like they are genuinely happy to see you. Everything you could possibly want is a phone call away. The worst part of your stay will be having to go back to reality at the end of it.

- Comforts & Necessities: 5
- Security: 5
- Neighborhood: 6
- Entertainment: 3
- Entertainment Assets: Gym, Indoor Arboretum, Swimming Pool
- Cost: 430¥ a night

RED LIGHT DISTRICT SAFEHOUSE

This isn't the showiest brothel in the red-light district—that would only draw attention. This is an out-of-the-way shack, where a weary madam holds court in a dingy front room. A dim hallway leads to three rooms where the working girls ply their trade. The secret, though, is the broom closet at the end of the hall—there's a trap door in the ceiling and a rope ladder that drops down, providing access to a small attic space above the brothel. A small group of people can rest there, away from the prying eyes of civilization—and most of the accompanying amenities.

- Comforts & Necessities: 3
- Security: 2
- Neighborhood: 3
- Entertainment: 0
- Entertainment Assets: Armory
- Options: Obscure/Difficult to Find, Safehouse
- Cost: 3,100 ¥ a month

ROBYN'S

Books—the actual, for-real, hold-in-your-hand things—fill this shop. The soft thud of cloth covers closing, the crinkle of paper, the odor of aged pages interleaved with dust make this shop a delight for the senses. And you can even buy books if you want. It's a great business to use as a cover, since you meet a range of knowledgeable (though often eccentric) people. Just don't' get so caught up in it that you forget you're a shadowrunner.

- Comforts & Necessities: 3
- Security: 5
- Neighborhood: 4
- Entertainment: 2
- Entertainment Assets: Merchandise: Goods (hard-copy books)
- Cost: 9,600¥ a Month

STUFFER SHACK

You can't live at these ubiquitous convenience stores, but some people give it their best shot. Full of sugary snacks, soy-based burgers, and of course loads of soykaf, Stuffer Shacks have food, public restrooms, and a staff that keeps them relatively clean, there often doesn't seem to be a compelling reason to leave. Just remember to buy something before the employee behind the counter gets edgy. Or you can take over management of the whole shop, and the glamorous life of a convenience store operator can be yours for as long as you can make the payments.

- Comforts & Necessities: 3
- Security: 3
- Neighborhood: 4
- Entertainment: 3
- Entertainment Assets: Merchandise: Goods (Food, 1 point), Soy Processing Unit, Walk-in Freezer
- Cost: 8,000¥ a Month

TYPICAL MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBAN HOME

White picket fence. Two-car-garage. All the electronic conveniences of modern life. This was many people's definition of the American Dream in the twentieth century, and though the United States has fragmented, the dream remains for many people. And it is attainable, as long as you sell yourself, body and soul, to a megacorp. If you are a shadowrunner, of course, you just have to assume that guise for as long as you can afford it. Or until you need a change.

- Comforts & Necessities: 3
- Security: 3
- Neighborhood: 4
- Entertainment: 4
- Entertainment Assets: Grid Subscription, Patron of the Arts (Seattle Art Museum), Public Transportation, Zen Den
- Cost: 5,000 ¥ a month

PACK YOUR KIT

One of the most daunting tasks for a new player is to face the admittedly large array of equipment options that exist in *Shadowrun*. There are guns for every occasion, no less than four different knives, lifestyles, vehicles, fake SINs ... it can all be overwhelming. Even seasoned players find themselves groaning over a calculator, trying to squeeze every last available nuyen. In an effort to make this process easier, we have pre-assembled character kits (PACKs) that allow you to quickly and easily make new characters by offering a collection of gear with pre-calculated nuyen and Karma costs. The collections presented here meet specific themes, as listed in the title, to help you quickly and easily build your vision for a character. The nuyen and Karma costs are listed with the title; in all cases the nuyen is evenly divisible by 2,000, so each PACK can be wholly purchased with the specified amount of Karma at character creation if desired. PACKs frequently note Availability for ease of reference.

EQUIPMENT PACKS

Gathering up equipment is vital for every shadowrunner. People have their special gear needs—a street samurai needs some augmentations, a weapon expert needs a good selection of guns, and a decker needs a cyberdeck—but there are also selections of gear that can be useful to just about anyone. Below is a mix of kits—some that are specialized, some that might be useful to anyone.

CORE PACKS

Core PACKs include the most essential gear for every shadowrunner, starting with a fake SIN and commlink, then making certain that you have armor, light in the darkness, and a certified credstick to offer you some flexibility in how you pay for stuff. Other PACKs might be a little esoteric, but they're still not specialized. Everyone can use a core PACK.

INTRO RUNNER PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA)

Suitable for rookie runners and people who've turned their backs on society at large, the Intro Runner PACK revolves around a barely functional fake SIN, one that is fine for ordering pizza or getting into a cheap dive but will crumble under any real scrutiny. A simple "Welcome to Seattle" package of software and respirator will get you where you need to be, if not in style. Fine for street scum and rat shamans, though professionals tend to go more upscale.

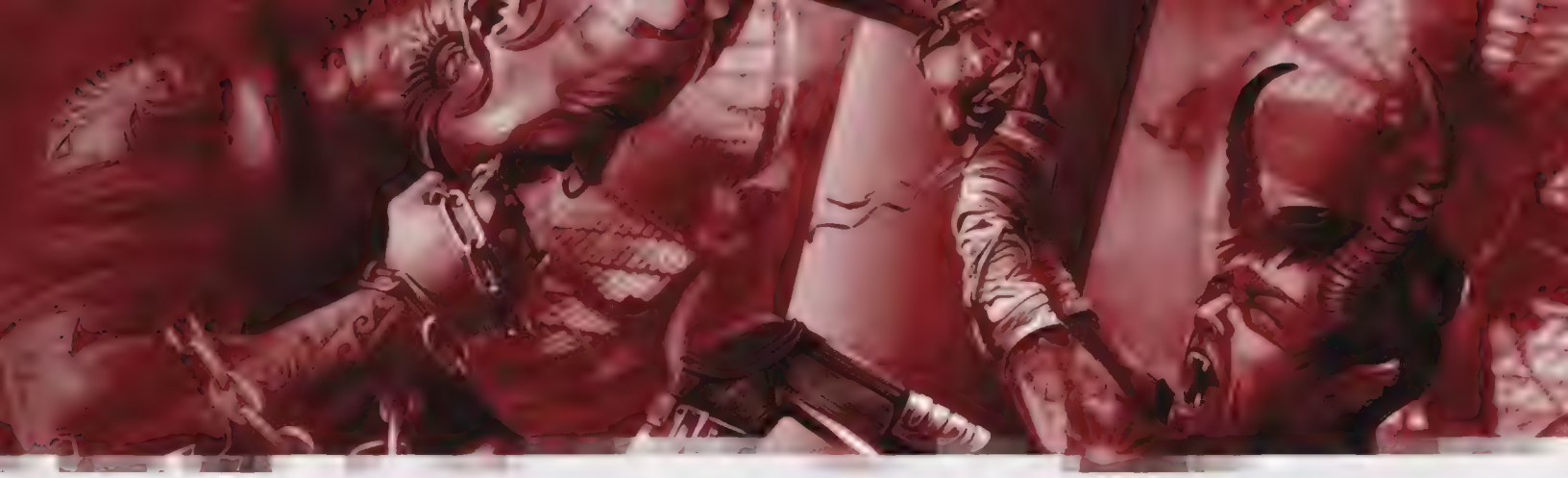
INTRO RUNNER PACK

ITEMS	
Fake SIN (1)	Mapsoft (campaign city)
Meta Link commlink	Standard credstick
Colt America L36 light pistol with two spare clips	Twenty plastic restraints
100 rounds of standard light pistol ammo	Flashlight
Knife	Backpack (20¥)
Armor vest	Respirator (1)
Glasses (1) with image link	

BASIC RUNNER PACK

(10,000¥/5 KARMA)

Considered the benchmark for a professional shadowrunner, the Basic Runner PACK revolves around a much better fake SIN, a more impressive commlink, and enough elements to operate with both a shadowrunning team and day-to-day society. In addition to the Seattle tourist bundle, now with audio cues and a soft-speaking tour guide at every AR feed, it comes with a secure radio for team communication and an emergency first-aid kit, all the better to keep the group in one piece.



BASIC RUNNER PACK

ITEMS	
Fake SIN (3)	Earbuds (1) with sound link
Renraku Sensei commlink	Metal restraints
Knife	Ten plastic restraints
Armor vest	Backpack (20¥)
Micro-transceiver	Flashlight
Mapsoft (campaign city)	Respirator (1)
Silver credstick	Survival kit
Glasses (1) with image link	Medkit (1)

ADVANCED RUNNER PACK

ITEMS	
Fake SIN (4)	Metal restraints
Erika Elite commlink with sim module and subvocal mic	Backpack (20¥)
Knife	Flashlight
Armor vest	Flashlight (low-light)
Micro-transceiver	Climbing gear
Tag eraser	Diving gear
Mapsoft (campaign city)	Gas mask
Gold credstick	Respirator (4)
Contacts (3) with image link, low-light vision, and flare compensation	Survival kit
Earbuds (3) with sound link (25¥) and select sound filter (2)	50 meters of rope
Camera (1) with vision magnification	Medkit (3)

ADVANCED RUNNER PACK

(20,000¥) (12F)

A step beyond the basic shadowrunner, the veteran picks the Advanced Runner PACK for its sturdy fake SIN and powerful commlink, topped with advanced optical and audio gear, an eraser for those ever-pesky wifi tags, and a wide array of situational gear for unusual situations. Scaling a building, swimming up a sewer line, even withstanding a chemical attack, it's all in a day's work for a veteran. An oft-overlooked component of the seasoned vet is a simple handheld video camera. Preliminary recon of a target is made easier when you can review the footage after the fact, but getting people's words and deeds on video gives rise to any number of extortion opportunities or trade. Never underestimate the power of watching the watchmen. Or watching those who watch the watchmen. And so on.

WEAPON AND AMMO PACKS

The trids love the subtle shadowrunner who talks his way out of problems, the cat burglar who steals from the rich without raising a fuss, and the mage whose finger-flicks can drop the biggest troll with a burst of sleepy sparkles. The unfortunate reality is that most shadowrunners rely on violence to get the job done, and a good set of weapons helps quite a bit. While not every shadowrunner will drip firepower from every centimeter of their body, this category is what separates the weapon specialists and street samurai from the face and smuggler. And we should note that the trids have also shown themselves to be fond of clattering gunfire and loud explosions.

CLASSIC SAMURAI PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (9R)

For the traditionalist in all of us comes the Classic Samurai PACK. Far and away the single most distinctive

aspect of a true samurai is the daisho, the matched blades of katana and wakizashi worn on the hip. Not as well known, but still important, are the dagger worn at the base of the spine, used most often for common cutting and shaving, and the bokken, a wooden training sword. One shouldn't kill one's sparring partner, after all. A kimono passable for day-to-day activities and an extensive reading collection complete the kit, reminding everyone that a samurai is a warrior-poet, not a thug with a sword.

CLASSIC SAMURAI PACK

ITEMS	
Katana	Bokken (treat as a club)
Wakizashi (treat as a sword)	Datasoft (The Art of War, The Book of Five Rings, The Tale of the Heike, and other assorted samurai writings and poetry)
Tanto (treat as a combat knife)	Kimono (50¥)

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL PACK

(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (12R)

Sometimes a man just needs killin'. In this day and age, most folks rely on firepower, but there's something to be said for looking in a man's eye when he takes his final breath. It's something of a stereotype that non-elf metahumans are the ones who are usually so armed, but the fact is that the larger metas can use their muscle mass to turn dangerous into deadly.

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL PACK

ITEMS	
Combat axe	Club
Katana	Extendable baton
Two knives	Telescoping staff
Combat knife	Knucks
Four throwing knives	

BLADEMASTER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (5R)

Seen as more graceful then the brute force of Up Close and Personal, a bandolier of blades has been a classic of intimidation from at least the days of piracy and continues to be threatening even today. Can you ever have too many knives? I say no!

BLADEMASTER PACK

ITEMS	
Two knives	Club
Two combat knives	Extendable baton
Two survival knives	

MONOWHIP PACK

(20,000¥/10 KARMA) (12F)

It's said that there are two types of monowhip wielders: the dead, and the very, very good. As dangerous to the wielder as it is to the target, the monowhip makes sure no wielder stays unscarred for long. Many opt for cybernetic replacements to repair their training injuries. If you decide to enter this elite club, make sure your health insurance is paid up. You're going to need it.

MONOWHIP PACK

ITEMS	
Monofilament whip	DocWagon contract (Basic) for one year, with one resuscitation pre-paid

BASIC BOWMAN PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8R)

Silent but deadly, the bow remains an unusual, but understandable, weapon for many shadowrunners. They're legal to own, and with hunting permits, you can even keep them in plain sight in your vehicle. Bows always see an upsurge in the fall, as well as when the latest Apache Eagle sim comes out. Duck season? Rabbit season? How about Knight Errant season? THUNK!

BASIC BOWMAN PACK

ITEMS	
Bow (4)	Ten doses of Narcojet toxin
Fifty arrows (4)	Survival knife
Ten injection arrows (4)	Survival kit

ADVANCED BOWMAN PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (12R)

The Basic Bowman PACK is fine for humans and beefy elves, but the troll archer is a known terror in the street. The Advanced Bowman PACK features one of the more powerful bows on the market and the proper accessories (telephone poles not included.)

ADVANCED BOWMAN PACK

ITEMS	
Bow (6)	Club
Fifty arrows (6)	Two knives
Five injection arrows (6)	Survival kit
Five doses of Narcojet toxin	

ARES PISTOL PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (5R)

It can be said that Ares ushered in the cybernetic era with the introduction of the Ares Predator, the first smartgun that could live up to both the hype and field conditions. Thirty years and five iterations later, Ares remains the leading arms manufacturer on Earth, and Ares pistols rule the streets. Trust in Ares quality.

ARES PISTOL PACK

ITEMS	
Ares Predator V heavy pistol, quick-draw holster, four spare clips	300 rounds of regular heavy pistol ammo
Ares Light Fire 70 light pistol, concealable holster, two spare clips	60 rounds of regular light pistol ammo

BIG BOOM PISTOL PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

While not as beloved as Ares, both Remington and Ruger remain in the game by being the most visceral guns on the market. The Roomsweeper can hold either solid slugs or spray pellets, while the Super Warhawk is famous for using brass shells. There's nothing quite like the all-metal heft, the giant kick, and the roar of thunder in your hands.

BIG BOOM PISTOL PACK

ITEMS	
Remington Roomsweeper heavy pistol, quick-draw holster	40 rounds of regular heavy pistol ammo
Ruger Super Warhawk heavy pistol, quick-draw holster, four speed loaders	150 rounds of regular heavy pistol ammo, cased
80 rounds of flechette heavy pistol ammo	

BROWNING AND BERETTA PISTOL PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (7R)

For years the silver medalist in the great gun wars, Browning's Ultra-Power has moved into a virtual tie with the Predator in unbiased polls (if you can believe that such things still exist in this day and age). Knowing that any good pistol is made better with a backup, Beretta matches the 201T's reliability with Browning's raw power.

BROWNING AND BERETTA PISTOL PACK

ITEMS	
Browning Ultra-Power heavy pistol, quick-draw holster, three spare clips	Beretta 201T light pistol, concealable holster, two spare clips
140 rounds of regular heavy pistol ammo	210 rounds of regular light pistol ammo

COLT PISTOL PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (7R)

Without the high tech of Ares or the raw power of Ruger, Colt remains a player in the field of pistols through one simple factor: They make the most reliable weapons around. Ubiquitous and unobtrusive, Colt firearms are sold all over the world, making them both easy to find and easy to lose.

COLT PISTOL PACK

ITEMS	
Colt Government 2066 heavy pistol, quick-draw holster, laser sight, three spare clips	Colt America L36 light pistol, concealable holster, two spare clips
280 rounds of regular heavy pistol ammo	110 rounds of regular light pistol ammo

SUBTLE PISTOL PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA (8F)

While all shadowrunners know that there are times to go in loud and proud, there are also times when you have to be quiet and careful. The subtle pistol pack slips through metal detectors with ease, though you're on your own to get your armor through. It's intended for use against unarmored targets, for assassinations when someone's at their most vulnerable, or as an intimidation tool that can be slipped past security. Note that the Slivergun is virtually silent while the palm pistol only gives a soft pop.

SUBTLE PISTOL PACK

ITEMS	
Ares Viper Slivergun heavy pistol, concealable holster, spare clip	Walther Palm Pistol hold-out, concealable holster
170 rounds of flechette heavy pistol ammo	10 rounds of regular hold-out pistol ammo

LIGHT SECURITY PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8R)

This PACK features a simple pair of weapons that are found in the hands of light security forces all over the world. It starts with the HK-227 submachine gun, combining burst fire with hitting power low enough that it won't punch through office walls and strike civilians. Since average security forces aren't expected to be sporting the latest in cybernetic gear, the HK-227 uses a simple laser sight for improved accuracy, while the Fichetti Security 600 serves as a superb backup.

LIGHT SECURITY PACK

ITEMS	
HK-227 submachine gun, four spare clips	Fichetti Security 600 light pistol, quick-draw holster, two spare clips
280 rounds of regular submachine gun ammo	90 rounds of regular light pistol ammo

JAPANACORP LIGHT SECURITY PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (7R)

A competitor to the more common Light Security PACK, the Japanacorp Light Security PACK is found most often in Shiawase facilities and areas that aren't under extra-territorial law. The main SMG is filled with non-lethal gel ammunition, with spare clips holding real bullets, bringing down targets safely so that they might be questioned. Some shadowrunners carry a similar load-out, building a Robin Hood-like reputation as they do their best to not kill anyone.

JAPANACORP LIGHT SECURITY PACK

ITEMS	
SCK Model 100 submachine gun, three spare clips	60 rounds of gel round submachine gun ammo
Beretta 201T light pistol, spare clip	70 rounds of regular light pistol ammo
300 rounds of regular submachine gun ammo	Ten plastic restraints

SMARTGUN PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

Oh sure, swords are nice, but when you need to kill a guy all the way over there, nothing does it better than a smartgun. The Ares Predator is a known commodity in the cyber-community, but the Ingram Smartgun has been seen as the definitive mark of a street samurai for two decades and counting. Company men won't touch them, of course, but that's their loss.

SMARTGUN PACK

ITEMS	
Ingram Smartgun X submachine gun, two spare clips	Ares Predator V heavy pistol, spare clip
200 rounds of regular submachine gun ammo	30 rounds of regular heavy pistol ammo

STREET SLUGGER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (4R)

Cheap and effective, the Street Slugger PACK is filled with several ways of dealing with gangers, one bang at a time. Simple, reliable, disposable—these are key words to live by and central descriptors of this kit. While the cyber-boosted shadowrunner likely looks elsewhere, rookies and street rats can always cobble this kit together. It may not look pretty, but it works, *omae*.

STREET SLUGGER PACK

ITEMS	
Defiance T-250 shotgun	100 rounds of flechette shotgun ammo
Colt America L36 light pistol with two spare clips	40 rounds of regular shotgun ammo
Streetline Special hold-out pistol	100 rounds of regular light pistol ammo
Knife	30 rounds of regular hold-out pistol ammo
Knucks	

HEAVY SECURITY PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8R)

When the going gets tough, the security guards call in high-threat response teams. If you want to meet them with their own toys, the Heavy Security PACK comes with the FN HAR to do it. Yeah, the ammo's regular instead of something fancy, but who wants to give APDS to grunts using a "spray and pray" methodology? You might note the lack of restraints in the kit. Speaks volumes, that.

HEAVY SECURITY PACK

ITEMS	
FN HAR, shock pad, six spare clips	210 rounds of regular assault rifle ammo

CHEAP SOLDIER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (4R)

Need an army but you can't afford proper mercenaries? Then gather up a bunch of kids, stuff them full of kamikaze, stick a gun in their hands, and send 'em at the enemy in waves. Not recommended for any shadowrunner who values their life, but you never know when you'll need to arm a few gangers for a job. You'd be surprised at how many gang wars this has won.

CHEAP SOLDIER PACK

ITEMS	
Colt M23 assault rifle, four spare clips	Three disposable inhalers (10¥ each)
Machete (counts as a sword)	Three doses of kamikaze
300 rounds of regular assault rifle ammo	

ARES ALPHA GUNNER PACK

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (12F)

Say what you will about the Excalibur fiasco, but the fact remains that the Ares Alpha stands atop the world of assault rifles like a titan, daring anyone to take them down. It doesn't fall into the hands of many shadowrunners, both because they are tightly controlled and because most shadowrunners don't like drawing the attention that carrying such a prominent weapon would bring. Get past microgrenades and fire modes better suited for Desert Wars than a B&E job, and you'll find a top-of-the-line smartgun with deadly aim. Just don't try to sneak it past security and you should be fine.

ARES ALPHA GUNNER PACK

ITEMS	
Ares Alpha assault rifle, shock pad, airburst link, eight spare clips	120 rounds of explosive assault rifle ammo
500 rounds of regular assault rifle ammo	Twelve fragmentation micro-grenades
40 rounds of APDS assault rifle ammo	Twelve high-explosive micro-grenades

SNIPER PACK

(22,000¥/11 KARMA) (12F)

Boom, headshot. Able to punch through heavily armored helmets, walls, and engine blocks, the most common nickname for anyone using an Ares Desert Strike is "God," because they can drop a target like a bolt from the blue. The gun itself is about as subtle as a jackhammer (and nearly twice as large!), but when you need to send a message, brother, it's received.

SNIPER PACK

ITEMS	
Ares Desert Strike sniper rifle, with low-light and smartlink added to the imaging scope	100 rounds of explosive sniper rifle ammo
100 rounds of APDS sniper rifle ammo	

SPORTSMAN PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (4R)

The best thing about the Sportsman PACK is that it's legal in just about every corner of North America. The Salish-Shidhe might pour over your records and registrations for a simple Ares Predator, but show up with a deer rifle and you just get waved on through. The Sportsman PACK also comes with a hunting bow and some simple woodsman gear. Nothin' fancy.

SPORTSMAN PACK

ITEMS	
Remington 950 hunting rifle with low-light added to the imaging scope	Flashlight
Bow (Rating 4)	Orange vest (5¥)
Survival knife	Twenty arrows (Rating 4)
Knife	250 shots of regular sniper rifle ammo
Survival kit	

TRANQ DARTER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8R)

You'd be surprised how often this one comes up. Originally designed to help zoo officials deal with large cats and, later, para-critters, it turns out that a dart full of tranquilizer can really help expedite an extraction. It also comes in handy for those more soft-hearted shadowrunners who hate to rub out security goons who are just doing their job.

TRANQ DARTER PACK

ITEMS	
Parashield dart rifle (option: replace this with two Parashield dart pistols)	10 injection darts
Re-usable syringe (25¥)	14 doses of Narcojet toxin

SQUAD ASSAULT WEAPON PACK

(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (12F)

Now we're talking quality bang-bang. The light machine gun has been the weapon of choice for mercenary runners since at least 2050 and shows no sign of being phased out any time soon. Sometimes, you need to fill the sky with lead and remind the other guy to keep his head down for a while. Ammo belts make that so much easier, and for the smaller-than-ork-sized merc, the bipod will let you keep the stream going vaguely in the direction you want. Riggers will strap one of these to almost anything.

SQUAD WEAPON ASSAULT PACK

ITEMS	
Ingram Valiant light machine gun	Bipod or belt of 100 rounds of regular machine gun ammo

MEDIUM MACHINE GUNNER PACK

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (12F)

While riggers and mercs go for the Valiant, trolls seem to take the Stoner under one arm as a matter of racial pride. Everyone else on the planet either keeps them on the supplied tripod or mounts them on a vehicle, but ever since Donald "DAH-nold" Klein's famous turn in *Troll Nacht*, everyone over two meters tall thinks they have to swing one of these things around.

MEDIUM MACHINE GUNNER PACK

ITEMS	
Stoner-Ares M202 machine gun	50 rounds of regular ammo
Tripod	Two ammo belts, each with 100 rounds of regular machine gun ammo

ROCKETEER PACK

(16,000¥/8 KARMA) (10F)

Want to know how Aztechnology competes with Ares? Sell one-shot rocket launchers in packs of five instead of one re-usable launcher and five rockets. The quality suffers, but they're cheap and plentiful enough that even some gangers wind up with one or two come the holidays. Pass one to all your friends and play a rousing round of "pin the tail on the dragon" sometime.

ROCKETEER PACK

ITEMS	
Five Aztechnology Striker disposable rocket launchers	Five fragmentation rockets

MACHINE GUN AMMO BELT PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (2R)

There's nothing quite like a good ammo box. Machine gun ammo comes in belts of a hundred, but the belts can be linked together for an unending stream of pencil rain. Plus you get to keep the ammo tin!

MACHINE GUN AMMO BELT PACK

ITEMS
Ten ammo belts, each 100 rounds of regular ammo

AMMO CRATE #1

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (2R)

Is there anything more embarrassing than running out of ammo in the middle of a firefight? If you're going to go join one, you need to be sure that you brought enough for everyone. It's only polite.

AMMO CRATE #1

ITEMS
1,000 rounds of regular ammo*

AMMO CRATE #2

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (12F)

Average ammo's fine for the average Joe, but if you want quality bullets, you're going to have to work for it. Exotic ammo's hard to find, high in cost, and highly illegal. Make sure you make every shot count; it's too expensive to spray automatic fire around.

AMMO CRATE #2

ITEMS	
100 rounds of APDS ammo*	100 rounds of explosive ammo*

AMMO CRATE #3

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

For non-lethal runs, you need non-lethal rounds. They're easier to find than most alternative ammo types, but not quite as in-demand as they were a few years back. Stick-n-Shock rounds were tangled up in a legal snafu and came out different on the far side to make lawyers happy. Gel rounds still work as advertised and are cheap enough for automatic fire.

AMMO CRATE #3

ITEMS	
160 rounds of gel ammo*	200 rounds of Stick-n-Shock*

AMMO CRATE #4

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (12F)

Simple. Effective. Illegal as all get-out. One crate'll last most shadowrunners for their whole career. Or until they get arrested or planted two meters under, whichever.

AMMO CRATE #4

ITEMS
250 rounds of assault cannon ammo

AMMO CRATE #5

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8R)

For the knockout artist in your life, how about a month's supply of Narcojet? Just the thing for lions, trolls, and jazzed-up folks who need to go to sleep for a while. Highly recommended for any medical personnel on your team.

AMMO CRATE #5

ITEMS
40 doses of Narcojet toxin

AMMO CRATES NOTE

* Note that the ammo contained in an ammo crate needs to be defined by the weapon category (i.e., light pistol, heavy pistol, assault rifle) when purchased. Crate ammo may be mixed, but each category comes in sets of 10. So you may have 20 light pistol and 80 heavy pistol, but not 25 light pistol and 75 heavy pistol. Ammo is caseless by default, but you may purchase cased ammo with no change in price.

BOX OF GRENADES #1

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (11F)

They say close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. Well, with this kit, you're halfway there. I'm afraid it doesn't come with a bag of nachos to go with the chunky salsa you're going to make.

BOX OF GRENADES #1

ITEMS	
Ten fragmentation grenades	Ten high-explosive grenades

BOX OF GRENADES #2

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

Need fewer shards of deadly metal whirling around and more breach and clear? Then try the second Box of Grenades kit! Smoke gets in their eyes, pepper in their nose, and then nausea in their belly. Cleanup on aisle kaboom!

BOX OF GRENADES #2

ITEMS	
Five flash-bangs	Five nausea gas grenades
Ten smoke grenades	Seven pepper punch grenades
Five tear gas grenades	Five thermal smoke grenades

ARMOR PACKS

Guns, grenades, and steel all have their place in dropping the opposition, but if you want to get home to enjoy the spoils of your misdeeds, you need armor. Most folks stick with the armor vest out of the core sets or upscale to a jacket, but for those who need a little more, Armor PACKs are here for you.

CITY SLICKER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA)

The most popular option for the professional runner on the go, the City Slicker PACK is designed with Seattle's awful weather in mind. The long coat helps hide all the things you don't want others to see (at least, until you want them to be seen) and is chemically treated to help with acid rain, keeping the rest of your clothes fresh and clean. Since coats come off, it also comes with a spare set of emergency-armored clothes, just the thing for when you have to pass your coat off to an extraction. Lastly, you get a better quality respirator for those days when the air quality index hovers as high as 300. Urbanization!

CITY SLICKER PACK

ITEMS	
Lined coat with chemical protection (2)	Respirator (3)
Armored clothes	

GO ANYWHERE JACKET PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (6)

Initially worn by Johnny Spinrad himself, the Spinrad Industries Go Anywhere Jacket lives up to his sterling reputation as a fashion trendsetter. Padded enough for when a high-speed stunt goes awry, fire-resistant, protective in cold up to forty below, and even acid-resistant, it has it all!

GO ANYWHERE JACKET PACK

ITEMS
Armored jacket with chemical protection (4), fire resistance (4), and insulation (4)

NEON NIGHTS PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (10)

Most shadowrunners don't want to be seen, but sometimes you want to shout your presence to the sky. Nothing does that as well as the Neon Nights PACK. The skintight bodysuit attracts eyes even when deactivated, but with a nudge from your commlink, it can light up in a wide array of colors and designs, from classic piping to scrolling advertisements, team logos, your favorite art, or just pumping out light in time with the beat. Shock frills are added here or there to make sure that while passers-by can look, they should never touch. Handy for couriers, but we recommend you turn the frills off when at the club. Trust us on that one.

NEON NIGHTS PACK

ITEMS
Urban Explorer Jumpsuit with helmet, electrochromatic modification, non-conductivity (2), and shock frills

NIGHTBIRD PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (12R)

Most shadowrunners prefer their armor thick, but with the Nightbird PACK, you try to avoid being attacked in the first place. Favored by would-be ninjas across the world, the suit covers everything but your eyes in a morphic material that mimics the local color for maximum stealth, topped off with gecko gloves for scaling into secret compounds. A pair of headlamps are included, one for assisting night vision goggles, the other for when you need to see actual colors.

NIGHTBIRD PACK

ITEMS	
Chameleon suit with thermal dampening (4)	Flashlight
Gecko gloves	Flashlight (low-light)

STYLISH SUIT PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (10)

Beloved by faces and Mr. Johnsons alike, Auctioneer's back-door operations have started selling "The Turncloak," a suit designed to put on whatever corporate logo is currently en vogue. Sure, you can change the entire suit's color, or even engage in garish displays fit for a biker gang, but the stylish wearer knows that a subtle shift is far more effective.

STYLISH SUIT PACK

ITEMS
Actioneer Business Clothes with electrochromatic modification

TACTICAL HELMET PACK

(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (11R)

You'd be shocked at how many shadowrunners never put on a helmet. Sure, it cuts your peripheral vision down a bit, but it also keeps your melon from being splattered, and that's a pretty fair tradeoff. Since you're going to put a helmet on anyway, you might as well be smart about it, and nothing's as smart as the Tactical Helmet PACK. The visor is equipped with state-of-the-art night-fighting capabilities, with protection against muzzle flare or suddenly having the house lights go up, and a proper smartgun link, keeping you well aware of where each bullet goes. You get communication gear and a powerful security-grade secure net to both talk on and keep tabs on your teammates. It even has a headlamp for bug hunts. What's not to love?

TACTICAL HELMET PACK

ITEMS	
Helmet with image link, flare compensation, low-light vision, and smartlink	Flashlight
Micro-transceiver (helmet-mounted)	Hermes Ikon commlink

TUSKER TOUGHSKIN PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6)

If you've never been pulled aside and questioned for walking while tusked, you won't understand why this jacket comes with taser-resistant lining. For those of you that have? You're welcome.

TUSKER TOUGHSKIN PACK

ITEMS
Armor jacket with non-conductivity (4)

TANKER PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (10R)

For when you really need that extra protection, you can't go wrong with the Tanker PACK. The main piece of gear is the riot shield, which comes with the standard contact taser to keep people back but has also been specially treated to shrug off Molotov cocktails. Above this is a fairly standard-issue helmet, but the visor's supposed to keep your face free of pepper and flash-bangs for when a crowd needs to disperse. Of course, if you want to wreck a little face, the twin hits of nitro by your chin will make sure that faces stay wrecked. It even comes with a proper club! If you ever wanted to give Lone Star a taste of their own medicine, or if you just like being the fort that the rest of your team can hide behind during an evac, the Tanker PACK is for you.

TANKER PACK

ITEMS	
Helmet with flare compensation and chemical protection (4)	Two one-shot inhalers, each loaded with a dose of nitro
Riot shield with fire resistance (4)	Club

CYBER PACKS

Putting the "cyber" into "cyberpunk," cyber kits are where meat meets the machine. Not everyone's willing to lop off perfectly good body parts for an electronic upgrade, but for those willing to pay the price, power follows. Note that while most people will only buy one or two normal PACKs for weapons, armor, or lifestyle, those who take cyber PACKs often take several. Unlike most equipment PACKs, we've broken these down into smaller chunks to help characters get precisely the upgrades they want. A few nuyen for a spare knife isn't a big deal, but Essence is a precious commodity that should never be wasted.

BUDGET 'JACK PACK

(40,000¥/20 KARMA) (4) (0.2 ESSENCE)

Shockingly expensive for entry-level hardware, the Budget 'Jack PACK is an introduction to the wide world of skillsofts, found in junior executives across the world. It often sees use as a translation station, with linguasofts being used for whatever location they get transferred to. When Horizon came roaring onto the scene, however, it became far more common to use their Singularity System and with it the Friday Knowsoft that serves as a personal secretary. Friday knows your schedule, can search the Matrix for data, and keep you up to date on the names and position of your co-workers. Or you can slot in algebra. Your call.

BUDGET 'JACK PACK

ITEMS
Skilljack (2)

STANDARD 'JACK PACK

(80,000¥/40 KARMA) (8) (0.4 ESSENCE)

Now we're talking. The budget 'jack might get your words across with a bit of gesticulation, but the Standard 'Jack PACK has enough raw power to serve as a dedicated translator and personal storehouse of science and trivia. Sign up for Friday Plus and get access to a much more powerful suite of data, including automated P2.0 social media updates, peer-reviewed suggestions, and more. The Standard 'Jack PACK can access knowsofts strong enough to give a basic competency on any topic, allowing an executive to step in, immediately grasp the core concepts of an idea, and allow their natural inventiveness to market the thing. Combined with skillwires, it's also good enough to allow you to schmooze with your boss while playing golf, handball, skydiving, or whatever his hobby of choice is without embarrassing yourself.

STANDARD 'JACK PACK

ITEMS
Skilljack (4)

ADVANCED 'JACK PACK

(120,000¥/60 KARMA) (12) (0.6 ESSENCE)

And here we get the top of the line. Speak like a native, get that college degree in biology you always wanted, or keep the statline for every Boston Red Sox player in history right at your fingertips. Neuron tips. Whatever. The point is that you don't get access to better skilljacks anywhere in the world. Be sure to pick up Friday Platinum, it's worth every nuyen. The only real downside to the Advanced 'Jack PACK is that you won't find skillwires that can keep up with the raw power you have. Then again, you can run quite a few activesofts at the same time with this level of skilljack, so it all works out in the end.

ADVANCED 'JACK PACK

ITEMS
Skilljack (6)

BASIC WIRES PACK

(40,000¥/20 KARMA) (8) (0.2 ESSENCE) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

It's cruise control for the human body—that's how skillwires are often explained. The Basic Wires PACK lets you perform card tricks, drive a stick shift, or repair appliances around the home, but you probably shouldn't involve yourself in anything potentially life-threatening when on autopilot. Then again, if you need to know how to land a plane *right now*, you don't really have time to go take flight school, so it's good to have on option.

ADVANCED WIRES PACK

(60,000¥/30 KARMA) (12) (0.3 ESSENCE) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

The top of the line for the majority of the population, the Advanced Wires PACK gives you access to core competency in a task. Quite a bit different than the single-task hardwires used in cheap factories in the third world, advanced wires let you move through a wide array of skills as you see fit, impressive enough to get through the day if not to win any prizes. From suddenly needing to know skydiving to starting a fire with a pair of sticks to field-stripping your weapon, you'll be ready for whatever you need. If all else fails, you can download Kung Fu.

TOURIST PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (2) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

A single linguasoft, detailed for a language and intended for travelers. Complex sentences can overwhelm it, but "How much?" and "This hurts!" and "Where is the bathroom?" are all perfectly programmed, along with expected responses, and really, isn't that enough?

WORLD TRAVELER PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (2) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

A single linguasoft for those who want to go off the tourist trail and see the real country they're in. The World Traveler PACK linguasoft is advanced enough to handle all but the most complicated sentences, to the point that you can live for years in a foreign land without ever needing to bother learning a single word of the local language.

AMBASSADOR PACK

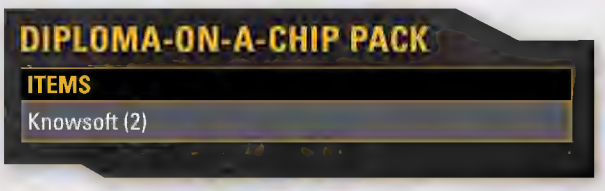
(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (2) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

The top-of-the-line linguasoft, the Ambassador PACK lets you speak as well as a native, even going so far as to correct the natives' diction when they slip up. You probably shouldn't, but you can.

DIPLOMA-ON-A-CHIP PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (4) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

About as good as having taken advanced classes in high school, the Diploma-on-a-Chip PACK gives you access to a broad, if not particularly deep, selection of knowledge. Each comes with enough fancy words to make people think you know what you're talking about, unless they're actually trained in the field. You might be surprised by how much even a passable grasp of chemistry, anatomy, and economics can help you out.



DEGREE-ON-A-CHIP PACK

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (4) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

As good as having a bachelor's, the Degree-on-a-Chip PACK is the single most popular skillsoft PACK offered. You can fit in with any profession by simply slotting a chip, allowing you to perform at an expected standard. Oh, sure, you'll never earn a promotion with your work, but you aren't getting fired either. Handle your own finances? Master the corporate infrastructure of Ares? Quit the rat race and retire to a farm upstate to grow artisan cabbage? There's a chip for that.

DEGREE-ON-A-CHIP PACK

ITEMS
Knowsoft (4)

DOCTORATE-ON-A-CHIP PACK

(12,000¥/6 KARMA) (4) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK)

The top of the line, the Doctorate-on-a-Chip PACK marks you as a true master of a field, even if you've never cracked a datafile on the subject in your life. Academic topics are obviously the most requested, but you can find complete histories of urban brawl, a master list of UCAS political groups (including calling lists for donations), and even Armchair General, where you can replay hundreds of battles in your head and see how it plays out if you make changes. Perhaps the most unusual one out there is called Truman, which includes a complete life history of a single Horizon employee, detailing every moment of his life in painstaking detail. Weirdly, it goes back to his childhood, long before Horizon even existed as a corporation. How do they *do* that?!

DOCTORATE-ON-A-CHIP PACK

ITEMS
Knowsoft (6)

VACATION-ON-A-CHIP PACK

(10,000¥/5 KARMA) (8) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK AND SKILLWIRES)

A basic introduction to any one of dozens of activities, from hang-gliding to scuba diving to mountain climbing, as well as more ordinary activities like golf, tennis, or shanking a guy in the shower with a shiv. You know, wholesome family fun. You won't win any contests, but you'll be able to participate at the company outing and not make a fool out of yourself.

VACATION-ON-A-SHIP PACK

ITEMS
Activesoft (2)

COMPETENCE-ON-A-CHIP PACK

(30,000¥/15 KARMA) (8) (REQUIRES A SKILLJACK AND SKILLWIRES)

If you really want to impress the boss, step up your game with the Competence-on-a-Chip PACK. Two related active skillsofts allow you to mix and match their use in an advanced capacity. You're still not good enough to beat the boss at his own game, of course, but you're a cut above what is expected, and that can open doors. Shadowrunners never know where a job will send them or what it'll ask, so why not be prepared? If you keep a few chips at hand, you'll be able to step in whenever a team member gets taken down. It's never a good day when the only pilot catches a terminal case of lead poisoning and nobody else knows how to work a yoke. Don't be that guy. Be competent.

COMPETENCE-ON-A-CHIP PACK

ITEMS
Two Activesofts (3)

Common pairings are: Acting (Impersonation and Performance), Parkour (Gymnastics and Running), Healing Hands (First Aid and Medicine), Warrior (Blades and Unarmed Combat), Cowboy (Longarms and Pistols), Like a Boss (Leadership and Negotiation), Scout (Survival and Tracking), Tech Support (Computer and Software), Mr. Fix-It (Automotive Mechanic and Industrial Mechanic), Star Power (Disguise and Performance), and GI Jack (Armorer and Automatics)

DATACOURIER PACK

(6,000¥/1 KARMA) (12) (0.1 ESSENCE)

In these days of high-speed wireless transmission, it's easy to forget that data isn't secure. Lines can be tapped, files decrypted, and deckers lurk in the Matrix, hunting for prey. Information that needs to be kept secure is often sent by courier, uploaded into the carrier's datajack, and secured behind a solid wall of encryption. Never underestimate the Sneakernet.

DATACOURIER PACK

ITEMS
Data lock (6)

SIM-SATIONAL PACK

(12,000¥/6 KARMA)
(12R) (0.7 ESSENCE)

Cybereyes remain the single most common upgrade in the world of cybernetics, but for those who want to truly experience the world, the Sim-sational PACK takes it one step further. With the ability to record everything you smell or taste, the emotions you feel while interacting with the world, and the ability to play that data back whenever you'd like and experience it again, the Sim-sationalist never has to endure mundane experiences again. Be sure to pick up cybereyes and -ears for the full experience!

SIM-SATIONAL PACK

ITEMS	
Datajack	Taste booster (1)
Olfactory booster (1)	Simrig

BASIC COMBAT EYES PACK

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (8R) (0.2 ESSENCE)

While it can be said that cybernetic eyes don't impact your humanity as much as many other upgrades, there's something about the experience that puts distance between a man and his violence. It's one thing to put on a pair of smartglasses, quite another to put a targeting reticle on every face you encounter. Rest in peace, Hatchetman.

BASIC COMBAT EYES PACK

ITEMS
Cybereyes (1) with image link, camera, and smartlink

ADVANCED COMBAT EYES PACK

(14,000¥/7 KARMA)
(8R) (0.3 ESSENCE)

While the basic eyes work for those on a budget, the full install kicks it up a notch with both low-light and thermographic vision, as well as flare compensation to handle the bright flashes of battle. For dedicated street samurai and mercs only.

ADVANCED COMBAT EYES PACK

ITEMS
Cybereyes (2) with image link, camera, flare compensation, low-light vision, smartlink, and thermographic vision

EAGLE EYES PACK

(14,000¥/7 KARMA) (6) (0.2 ESSENCE)

The Eagle Eyes PACK is combat-free and legal everywhere you go, replacing those weak peepers of your birth with modern cyber-opticals that highlight important details and have an amazing zoom. They also come in different colors!

EAGLE EYES PACK

ITEMS
Cybereyes (1) with image link, camera, vision enhancement (2), and vision magnification

RABBIT EARS PACK

(18,000¥/9 KARMA) (6) (0.2 ESSENCE)

While generally resembling metahuman ears, cyberears can be styled in any shape, from classic antennae-sporting earcups to elf tips to whatever your imagination can come up with. No matter what the outside looks like, the inside's what counts, letting you focus on two things at once to the exclusion of everything else around you, as well as pinging local AR feeds and amplifying sounds you've marked as important.

RABBIT EARS PACK

ITEMS
Cyberears (1) with sound link, audio enhancement (2), and select sound filter (2)

BULLETPROOF JEFF PACK

(24,000¥/12 KARMA)
(12R) (2.0 ESSENCE)

In today's world, more and more shadowrunners turn away from cybernetics for the less-invasive world of bioware. That's nice and all, but there's a few things metal can do that meat just can't, and on top of that list is the ability to bounce bullets. The Bulletproof Jeff PACK might not look pretty, but the user can take a Predator round to the chest and get back up, or break a bat over his forearm with barely a wince. Which is a great visual when you're working on intimidation.

BULLETPROOF JEFF PACK

ITEMS	
Bone lacing (aluminum)	Dermal plating (2)

BASIC RAZORBOI PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (8F) (0.4 ESSENCE)

Razorbois and gillettes have one foot in the world of street gangs and the other in the shadows. Cybered-up punks are nothing new, but the single element that defines the name comes in the form of retractable finger blades and a desire to use said blades to solve problems. Illegal all across North America, hand razors announce to everyone that you're dangerous. Most razorbois are taking their first steps toward being proper street samurai, and they often carry around a katana to show they have more than one trick in their bag. All of them carry tools to keep their blades functional and sharp. More experienced ones add more cybernetics to their bag of tricks.

BASIC RAZORBOI PACK

ITEMS	
Two hand razors (retractable)	Cybernetics kit
Katana	

ADVANCED RAZORBOI PACK

(12,000¥/6 KARMA)
(12F) (0.6 ESSENCE)

Huge twenty years ago, cyber-spurs have fallen out of fashion with today's cyberwarrior. Still, there's always room for a few throwbacks. (Oh, and for the record? Contrary to popular opinion, the best spurs are made in the Athabaskan Council.) This PACK also includes a medkit, for those times you step wrong and dig a spur into your own calf.

ADVANCED RAZORBOI PACK

ITEMS	
Two spurs (retractable)	Cybernetics kit
Katana	Medkit (2)

BASIC SPEEDBOOST PACK

(40,000¥/20 KARMA)
(8R) (2.1 ESSENCE)

Cops use jazz. Soldiers use kamikaze. And shadowrunners? Shadowrunners get wired. In the old days, they never turned off, which gave you a shorter lifespan one way or the other. These days, you can control them with a mental switch, but it's still the single most jarring transformation you can get. The datajack's there for general utility and quickly loading in firmware updates.

BASIC SPEEDBOOST PACK

ITEMS	
Datajack	Wired reflexes (1)

ADVANCED SPEEDBOOST PACK

(150,000¥/75 KARMA)
(12R) (3.1 ESSENCE)

The Advanced Speedboost PACK is where mercenaries and street samurai part ways. It's one thing to be a combative force, quite another to stand apart from humanity. Handle with extreme caution.

ADVANCED SPEEDBOOST PACK

ITEMS	
Datajack	Wired reflexes (2)

BASIC VATJOB PACK

(28,000¥/14 KARMA)
(5R) (1.5 ESSENCE)

While the professional shadowrunner might shy away from the older methods of augmentation, there are not a lot of upgrades that give you more nudge for your nuyen than muscle replacement. Go from a fifty-kilo pushover to a hundred-kilo stud after only a couple of weeks floating in a tank.

BASIC VATJOB PACK

ITEMS	
Dermal plating (1)	Muscle replacement (1)

ADVANCED VATJOB PACK

(56,000¥/28 KARMA)
(10R) (3.0 ESSENCE)

Did I say you could add a hundred kilos? How about a hundred and fifty? How can you not be impressed by the ability to turn a human into an ork, or an ork into a troll, one muscle fiber at a time? Cheap, but terribly taxing on your body.

ADVANCED VATJOB PACK

ITEMS	
Dermal plating (2)	Muscle replacement (2)

BASIC RIGGER PACK

(56,000¥/28 KARMA)
(5R) (1.3 ESSENCE)

Not just for the man in the van anymore, drone riggers can be found floating around shadowrunners—mostly on their side, but sometimes as security devices tied into buildings. The Basic Rigger PACK gives you the cyber-parts you need to jump in, but you still need a proper commlink and rigger-enabled machines.

BASIC RIGGER PACK	
ITEMS	
Control rig (1)	Reflex enhancer (1)

ADVANCED RIGGER PACK

(124,000¥/62 KARMA)
(10R) (2.7 ESSENCE)

There's rigging, and then there's *rigging*. Much as stepping up from wired reflexes (1) to (2) separates the mercs from the samurai, so too does a more powerful control rig separate the drone pilots from the true speed addicts.

ADVANCED RIGGER PACK	
ITEMS	
Datajack	Reflex enhancer (2)
Control rig (2)	

STREET SAMURAI CLASSIC PACK

(204,000¥/102 KARMA)
(12F) (5.5 ESSENCE)

Retro is in! Putting several kits together in one mega-kit, the street samurai classic is a one-stop shop for those who want to go back to the days of high chrome. How can you not love anyone so shiny?

STREET SAMURAI CLASSIC PACK	
ITEMS	
Advanced Combat Eyes PACK	Basic Vatjob PACK
Advanced Speedboost PACK	Advanced Razorboi PACK

BIOWARE BEEF PACK

(62,000¥/31 KARMA)
(10R) (0.4 ESSENCE)

Why replace your muscles with bulky artificial bundles when you can just layer on slabs of beef? This may be more expensive, but it's healthier.

BIOWARE BEEF PACK
ITEMS
Muscle augmentation (2)

BIOWARE LEAN PACK

(64,000¥/32 KARMA)
(10R) (0.4 ESSENCE)

For those more interested in grace than power, the Bioware Lean PACK lets you be dangerous in a fight but still be slim and fashionable at night.

BIOWARE LEAN PACK
ITEMS
Muscle toner (2)

BIOWARE CAT PACK

(28,000¥/14 KARMA)
(12) (0.4 ESSENCE)

Sometimes combined with the Lean PACK or cyber-ears, at its core, the Bioware Cat PACK is a touch of transhumanism that doesn't impact one's essence quite so badly as more extreme options. Quite popular in Japan!

BIOWARE CAT PACK	
ITEMS	
Cat's eyes	Enhanced articulation

BIO-COMPUTER PACK

(82,000¥/41 KARMA)
(12) (0.7 ESSENCE)

Biologically boosting the body is easy to see, both in the process and in the benefits, but the more subtle brain-boosting PACKs shouldn't be overlooked. Quite popular with the corporate set, the Bio-Computer PACK gives you unmatched mental processing power. Whether you're in the market or the lab, you can stay one step ahead of the Saitos of the world.

BIO-COMPUTER PACK	
ITEMS	
Datajack	Mnemonic enhancer (2)
Cerebral booster (2)	

BIOWARE COMPANY MAN PACK

(100,000¥/50 KARMA)
(6R) (0.8 ESSENCE)

Commonly found in bodyguards, assassins, and "executive assistants," the Bioware Company Man PACK stands in for cybernetic boosts in the wealthier world. Corporations are willing to invest more money in a higher-quality product that maintains a proper look and feel over a cheaper series of upgrades that upset the aesthetic of the human body. Add in some Beef or Lean, top it all off with some cyber-optics or nice shades, and you have yourself a discreet companion for all occasions.

BIOWARE COMPANY MAN PACK	
ITEMS	
Bone density augmentation (1)	Synaptic booster (1)

LIFESTYLE PACKS

It might seem silly, but you'd be amazed at how many forget to pay their bills. Lifestyle PACKs are the reminder that keeps the lights turned on and the fridge running cold. Don't forget to invest in one!

BUG-OUT BAG

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (4F)

Despite our best intentions, sometimes you have to dump your current life and make a break for it, setting up shop somewhere else while you keep your head down and figure out what's going on. The Bug-Out Bag contains a false ID good enough for renting a place in the slums, a change of clothes, and enough spare cash to get you through a month while you try and get your head together. Hope it's enough, chummer!

BUG-OUT BAG	
ITEMS	
Fake SIN (1)	Metal restraints
Sony Emperor commlink	Ten blank datachips
Armor clothing	Ten security tags
Dufflebag (20¥)	Two doses of long haul
Streetline Special hold-out pistol with 30 rounds of regular ammo and spare clip	Standard credstick with 1,000¥ pre-loaded
Knife	

STREET RAT PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA)

The life of a barrens-dweller is one that most shadowrunners want to escape, not enjoy. Still, beggars can't be choosers and gangers are loathe to leave their old homes.

STREET RAT PACK
ITEMS
Four months of Squatter lifestyle

LOWLIFE PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA)

The vast majority of Seattle, and indeed much of the UCAS, struggles by at this level, slogging from one grey day to the next, one payday away from losing everything. Typical shadowrunners are no different, even if they aspire to greater things,

LOWLIFE PACK
ITEMS
One month of Low lifestyle

SUCCESS IN THE SHADOWS PACK

(10,000¥/5 KARMA)

This is the level of established players. You have a rep, a string of completed missions, and a dedicated fixer, and now you get to have a taste of how the corporate types live. The downside is that you're far more rooted

to one spot, and of course you have far more to lose than you did when you were grubbing for food. Veterans wind up here, but only true professionals stay.

SUCCESS IN THE SHADOWS PACK
ITEMS
Two months of Middle lifestyle

HIGH LIFE PACK

(20,000¥/10 KARMA)

And then there are the dreamers who make it big. You can count the number of shadowrunners who live the high life in a city on two hands and have fingers left over. Those good enough to get here invariably go over to The Man, either drafted, bought, or made an offer too good to refuse. Independent operators without a support network are just too vulnerable. Still, if you can keep this kind of life up, you're a rare and valuable talent indeed. Keep up the good work!

HIGH LIFE PACK
ITEMS
Two months of High lifestyle

COLOR PACKS

Beyond the basics, guns, and a place to live, there's the actual color of a character. If you're a mechanic, a combat medic, or a B&E specialist, you'll find all the tools you need to do your job right here.

COCKTAIL KID PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (4R)

In a world of legal mood-benders and combat chemicals, it's quite a surprise that fewer people don't try a good Cocktail Kid PACK. You get uppers to keep you awake, downers to put you asleep, sniffs for the party, and snuffs for the brawl. Of course, abusing these things never ends well, but that's for little people, not you, right? You can handle it. Of course you can.

COCKTAIL KID PACK	
ITEMS	
Ten disposable syringes	Five doses of kamikaze
Ten disposable inhalers (10¥ each)	Twenty doses of zen
Ten doses of jazz	Twenty doses of novacoke
Five doses of long haul	

GUNBUNNY PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

For those who just love to tinker, tweak, and fiddle with their weapons, the Gunbunny PACK is all about transferrable accessories. Making dumb guns smart, putting lasers where you need them, cleaning, rebuilding ... whatever the need, you're always at the ready.

GUNBUNNY PACK	
ITEMS	
Armorer kit	Image scope with low-light
Two laser sights	Shock pad
Two external smartgun systems	

DRONE MECHANIC PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA)

In a similar vein, riggers love to tinker with their machines and are well aware that you always need the right tool for the job. So why not take all the tools?

DRONE MECHANIC PACK	
ITEMS	
Aeronautics Mechanic kit	Electronic Warfare kit
Automotive Mechanic kit	Nautical Mechanic kit

MECHANIC SHOP PACK

(6,000¥/1 KARMA) (8)

While the Mechanics Shop PACK is intended essentially to be a small, full-functioning garage and a little bit more (complete with work coveralls, a breathing mask, and most important of all a roll of duct tape), it's not a difficult tweak to create a similar shop and kit combination for aircraft, watercraft, firearms, or virtually anything else that uses a build and repair skill.

MECHANIC SHOP PACK	
ITEMS	
Automotive Mechanic kit	Flashlight
Automotive Mechanic shop	Roll of duct tape (5¥)
Shopsoft (car parts)	Chemsuit (1)
Knowsoft (car makes and models)	Respirator (1)

EAVESDROPPER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

A simple kit for a simple task: listening in and recording someone else's private communications. Datataps let you look over sent data and commcalls, while micro-cameras can be set around a room, watching and listening until they are collected.

EAVESDROPPER PACK

ITEMS	
Five datataps	Five micro-cameras (1)

SURVEILLANCE PACK

(2,000/1 KARMA) 6R)

Sometimes, you just need to keep eyes and ears on a target at all times. Weirdly enough, it's not that different from being a reporter.

SURVEILLANCE PACK

ITEMS	
Binoculars (optical)	Periscope
Binoculars (digital) (1) low-light vision	Directional mic (1) with select sound filter (1)
Camera (1) with vision magnification	Laser mic (1) with audio enhancement (1)
Micro-camera (1) (no enhancements pre-loaded)	

BREAKING AND ENTERING PACK

(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (12F)

For when the world wants you out and you want in, look no further than the Breaking and Entering PACK. The autopicker gets you through older doors, the keycard copier can get you through new ones (assuming you've managed to acquire a card to copy first, of course), while the sequencer is there if all else fails. Just be careful; most of this stuff is horribly illegal.

BREAKING & ENTERING PACK

ITEMS	
Autopicker (4)	Sequencer (4)
Keycard copier (5)	

JAMMER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (12F)

For those who put a premium on privacy, the Jammer PACK lets you shut out the world, at least for a while. Keep in mind that in the modern world, it's both terribly illegal and quite noticeable when a large area goes dead. The bug scanner and white noise generator may be used liberally, but the jammer is for emergencies only.

JAMMER PACK

ITEMS	
Area jammer (4)	Tag eraser
Bug scanner (5)	White noise generator (5)

MEDIC PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6-)

Try as you might, sometimes accidents happen. When they do, it's always good to have someone on hand to make it better again. The handheld biomonitor can be used to scan yourself or others, while the high-end medkit will keep you alive. Hopefully.

MEDIC PACK

ITEMS	
Medkit (6) with two refills	Biomonitor

MEDICAL PATCHES PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (10)

A poor alternative for a medical kit, but a nice accessory for one, the Medical Patches PACK is filled with one-use slap patches, good for antivenin, sedatives to let a patient sleep through the pain, a stim patch for emergencies, and trauma patch for *dire* emergencies.

MEDICAL PATCHES PACK

ITEMS	
Five antidote patches (4)	Four tranq patches (5)
Stim patch (4)	Trauma patch

MOUNTAINEERING PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (4)

Intended for visiting wild spaces, it turns out that all this gear works nearly as well climbing buildings. Who knew? Also includes a little medkit for those times when you slip.

MOUNTAINEERING PACK

ITEMS	
Climbing gear	Survival kit
Flashlight	Grapple gun with 400 meters of microwire
Five magnesium torches	100 meters of standard rope
Micro flare launcher with three micro flares	Medkit (2)
Rappelling gloves	

INFILTRATION PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (11R)

It's one thing to be sneaky; it's quite another to be a modern-day ninja. The disguise kit makes sure that if they get a face on camera, it won't be yours. On top of that, while lockpicks aren't as easy to operate as an autopicker, they are far easier to conceal and can be effective in the right hands.

INFILTRATION PACK

ITEMS	
Disguise kit	Ten stealth tags
Lockpicks	Ten plastic restraints
Contacts (2) with image link and low-light vision	Subvocal mic
Flashlight	Transceiver
Flashlight (low-light)	Camera (1)
Twenty blank datachips	

DEMOLITIONIST PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8R)

Everything you need to set up some proper boom-boom. If you buy this kit multiple times, you can replace the demolitions kit with four more detonators and two more kilos of commercial explosive.

DEMOLITIONIST PACK

ITEMS	
Demolitions kit	Eight detonator caps
Twelve kilograms of commercial explosive	

VEHICLE PACKS

Everybody needs wheels. You like them to get you to the crime scene, but you *really* like them getting you away from it. Nobody wants to hire a shadowrun team that takes the bus to their objective.

BUNNY HOPPER PACK

(10,000¥/5 KARMA)

Laugh all you want, but the Jackrabbit is one of the more popular commuter cars in the sprawl. You'll never outrun the police in one, but you can easily blend in with the herd.

BUNNY HOPPER PACK

ITEMS
Chrysler-Nissan Jackrabbit

RACING BIKE PACK

(10,000¥/5 KARMA)

Here's a shadowrunner classic. Fast and maneuverable, racing bikes are able to take back alleys and main roads equally, rolling through traffic if you're bold. They also can be taken indoors to hide them better. This kit is always a great choice.

RACING BIKE PACK

ITEMS	
Suzuki Mirage racing bike	Mapsoft (city streets)
Armor clothing	Shopsoft (motorcycles and motorcycle parts)
Two helmets with image link and sound link (25¥ each)	Automotive mechanics kit

COMBAT BIKER PACK

(12,000¥/6 KARMA)

The stereotypical combat hog for orks and trolls, the Scorpion remains the best combat bike out there. It's frequently purchased as a throwback for the gas-guzzling, smoke-belching power of a combustion engine.

COMBAT BIKER PACK

ITEMS
Harley-Davidson Scorpion

ALL-AMERICAN PACK

(16,000¥/8 KARMA)

Another choice for those who want to blend, the Americar also has many throwback styles, eschewing GridGuide for the wide-open road. Run-down versions are everywhere in the barrens. Some even work!

ALL-AMERICAN PACK

ITEMS
Ford Americar

TEAM VAN PACK

(36,000¥/18 KARMA)

The stock van is a canvas waiting for a rigger to paint a story. Some prep them for combat, with turrets and dispensers, some for recon, with giant antennae and drone racks, others for stealth, with electrochromatic paint and alternate VINs. It always starts with a simple GMC Bulldog and someone shouting, "Get in the van, GET IN THE VAN NOW!" Good times.

TEAM VAN PACK

ITEMS
GMC Bulldog with rigger interface

OFF ROAD PACK

(40,000¥/20 KARMA)

While it's an off-road vehicle, don't think of the Gopher as a gas-guzzler. Those holding sway over the rural areas are often sticklers about environmental policy, so off-road vehicles like this tend to be fitted with long-life batteries and emergency solar power collectors. For anyone who needs to get out of the sprawl for a while, be it for hunting or for hiding. Throw in a Growler so you have a choice about how you travel when you're off the plascrete.

OFF ROAD PACK

ITEMS	
Toyota Gopher	Yamaha Growler

NON-COMBAT RIGGER PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (4-)

Upgrade two of your vehicles to riggerable. Nice and simple.

NON-COMBAT RIGGER PACK

ITEMS
Rigger interface for two vehicles

COMBAT RIGGER PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (8F)

Upgrade one of your vehicles with a weapon mount. Quite illegal, so drive carefully.

COMBAT RIGGER PACK

ITEMS	
Rigger interface	Standard weapon mount with manual operation option

DECKER PACKS

Only a year or two ago, hackers could count on their commlinks cracking code with a disturbing ease, and many a shadowrunner dabbled in hacking on the side. That time has passed. In today's world, the current Matrix protocols are virtually impregnable, with only those with advanced skills are able to construct either the hardware of a true cyberdeck or the code to go inside it. A handful of corporations make their own decks, and some of those have slipped into the street, but the vast majority are hand-created knockoffs of the real thing, held together with spit, duct tape, and prayers.

INTRO TO HACKING PACK

(58,000¥/29 KARMA) (3R)

The deck inside is less likely the official Microdrek product than a scratch-built monstrosity, cobbled together with the guts of several commlinks and suggestions gathered from hidden Matrix nodes. The Intro to Hacking PACK holds the most common cyberdeck in

today's world, obtainable by even street gangs with enough technical know-how and some theft.

INTRO TO HACKING PACK
ITEMS
Microdeck Summit cyberdeck

BASIC DECKER PACK

(124,000¥/62 KARMA) (6R)

Suitable for a professional shadowrunner. Although it may not have any bleeding-edge tech, the Basic Decker PACK provides a machine good enough to get the job done in most cases. It's a significant investment that defines the line between hobbyist and pro.

BASIC DECKER PACK	
ITEMS	
Hermes Chariot cyberdeck	Software kit
Hardware kit	

ADVANCED DECKER PACK

(346,000¥/173 KARMA) (12R)

At the very bleeding edge of decking's next generation, the Advanced Decker Kit defines a character as strongly as wired reflexes define a street samurai, allowing them to go head to head with the best the megacorps can send out and often come out ahead. Often, but not always.

ADVANCED DECKER PACK	
ITEMS	
Sony CIY-720 cyberdeck	Software kit
Hardware kit	

BASIC CYBERDECK PROGRAMS PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA)

Containing the tools every decker's arsenal needs, the Basic Cyberdeck Programs PACK lets you stay hidden, find what you need, and hide.

BASIC CYBERDECK PROGRAMS PACK	
ITEMS	
Sony CIY-720 cyberdeck	Software kit
Hardware kit	

ADVANCED CYBERDECK PROGRAMS PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (6R)

The Advanced Cyberdeck Programs PACK lets you go toe-to-toe with hostiles. Who needs to hide when you can just rip big holes through whatever security throws against you while bouncing their attacks like tennis balls hitting steel?

ADVANCED CYBERDECK PROGRAMS PACK
ITEMS
Hacking cyberprograms: Armor, Biofeedback, Blackout, Guard, Hammer, Mugger, Shell

DRONE PACKS

While these PACKs are the special domain of riggers, they are not limited to that group. You'd be surprised how useful one of the little guys can be to everyone else.

BASIC DRONE COMMANDER PACK

(16,000¥/8 KARMA) (6R)

For those looking for basic drone interaction, including reporters who want cameras in sensitive places and deckers who want to establish a signal relay, the Basic Drone Commander PACK will get the job done, while also serving well enough for street-level riggers.

BASIC DRONE COMMANDER PACK
ITEMS
Easy Motors DroneMaster rigger control console

ADVANCED DRONE COMMANDER PACK

(66,000¥/33 KARMA) (10R)

The Advanced Drone Commander PACK is intended for more dedicated riggers who need to keep a network humming in dangerous situations while running against opponents who are quite capable of disrupting the beautiful networks of drones they construct.

ADVANCED DRONE COMMANDER PACK
ITEMS
Vulcan LiegeLord rigger control console

RIGGER SUPPORT PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (9R)

Regardless of the rigger control console taken, a little support goes a long way. The Rigger Support PACK comes with the basic software you need to augment your RCC, tags to discreetly keep an eye on your drones, a kit for keeping your broadcast strength up, and a handy sidekick with a personality all its own to help operate your drones, butler your home, or just provide conversation.

RIGGER SUPPORT PACK

ITEMS	
Basic programs: Encryption, Signal Scrub, and Toolbox	Ten stealth tags
Hacking program: Sneak	Electronic Warfare kit
Pilot Program (3)	

DOG BRAIN PACK

(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (6)

While any drone can handle the basics with the onboard piloting program, they always do better with a little help.

DOG BRAIN PACK

ITEMS
Four Autosoft (3) programs

(Common choices are (Model) Targeting and (Model) Maneuvering for combat drones, (Model) Stealth and Clearsight for spy drones, with Electronic Warfare and First Aid for more specialized drones.)

As an additional option, you might purchase an Agent (2) program (2,000¥/1 Karma and 6 availability) to serve as a personality matrix for a drone or vehicle, allowing them fully autonomous operation. Never know when you'll need to whistle for your car.

BASIC SPY DRONE PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8)

All it takes is a little upgrade to the optical and audio sensors to make the already impressive Kanmushi into an excellent spy.

BASIC SPY DRONE PACK

ITEMS
Shiawase Kanmushi with low-light vision and select sound filter (2)

ADVANCED SPY DRONE PACK

(22,000¥/11 KARMA) (10)

For those who need an eye in the sky, you can't do better than an upgraded Lockheed. Vision magnification lets you get good detail on the ground so far below, while the select sound filter allows you to follow a particular engine.

ADVANCED SPY DRONE PACK

ITEMS
Lockheed Optic-X2 with vision enhancement (1), vision magnification, and select sound filter (1)

BASIC COMBAT DRONE PACK

(6,000¥/3 KARMA) (5R)

The heavy support of choice for most riggers is both semi-legal and dangerous. The Colt Cobra SMG is able to keep a high rate of fire for an extended period, but stray shots aren't likely to punch through walls. Keep it civil, kids!

BASIC COMBAT DRONE PACK

ITEMS
GM-Nissan Doberman with Colt Cobra TZ-120 submachine gun and 170 rounds of regular ammo

ADVANCED COMBAT DRONE PACK

(28,000¥/14 KARMA) (10R)

There's heavy support, and then there's *heavy* support. The Steel Lynx is an unmanned tank in all but name, but you can still get a license for it with the right connections. For this reason, it comes unarmed, but ready to mount whatever you think you can get away with, from tasers and tranq darts to medium machine guns or rocket launchers.

ADVANCED COMBAT DRONE PACK

ITEMS
Steel Lynx with low-light vision, smartlink, and thermographic vision *(Don't forget to buy a weapon PACK for the drone!)*

AIR COMBAT DRONE

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (8F)

The MCT-Nissan rotodrone is the single most modified thing in the sky, but they get real antsy when you strap a gun to it.

ADVANCED SPY DRONE PACK

ITEMS
MCT-Nissan Rotodrone with low-light vision
Standard weapon mount
(Don't forget to buy a weapon PACK for the drone!)

ADVANCED AIR COMBAT DRONE PACK

(18,000¥/9 KARMA) (8F)

Death from the skies, be they blue, black, or cloudy. The twin weapon mounts give you some serious options for firepower.

ADVANCED AIR COMBAT DRONE PACK

ITEMS
Cyberspace Designs Dalmatian with low-light vision, smartlink, and thermographic vision
Two standard weapon mounts
(Don't forget to buy a weapon PACK for the drone!)

MAGIC PACKS

An important aspect of magical PACKs is that many require extra Karma, beyond the monetary cost. This is reflected with a second cost of +X Karma on each PACK.

BASIC MAGICIAN PACK

(2,000¥/1 KARMA) (8)

Easily the standard for all mages, including street shamans, the magical lodge materials are vital for any summoner.

BASIC MAGICIAN PACK

ITEMS
Magical lodge materials (4)

ADVANCED MAGICIAN PACK

(4,000¥/2 KARMA) (12)

For those following the higher mysteries, a top-flight lodge is combined with ample reagents for all manner of trickery.

ADVANCED MAGICIAN PACK

ITEMS	
Magical lodge materials (6)	Fifty drams of reagents

MAGIC WAND PACK

(36,000¥/18 KARMA) (+12 KARMA) (8R)

While a power focus can take any shape, a magic wand is a staple for many hermetic mages. You have to love the classics.

MAGIC WAND PACK

ITEMS
Power focus (2)

MAGIC STAFF PACK

(54,000¥/27 KARMA) (+18 KARMA) (12R)

Everyone knows that wands are great, but if you really want to show off your power as a spellcaster, you carry a staff. Of course, carrying around a big stick may be cumbersome, so the "staff" in question might be a branch-shaped lapel pin, but the basic principle remains.

MAGIC STAFF PACK

ITEMS
Power focus (3)

BASIC MEDICINE BAG PACK

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (+4 KARMA) (6R)

The medicine bag used here is but one of many spell foci that you can use. In this case, a shaman's traditional bag is used for healing magic, but a dreamcatcher for counterspelling, an amulet for sustaining, or a drum for ritual magic are all the same cost. If you need more power, opt for the Advanced Medicine Bag PACK.

BASIC MEDICINE BAG PACK

ITEMS
Spell focus: Spellcasting (Health) (2)

ADVANCED MEDICINE BAG PACK

(15,000¥/8 KARMA) (+8 KARMA) (12R)

ADVANCED MEDICINE BAG PACK

ITEMS

Spell focus: Spellcasting (Health) (4)

BASIC SPIRIT STICK PACK

(8,000¥/4 KARMA) (+4 KARMA) (6R)

A quality spirit focus will carry trappings to persuade spirits to serve, if used for summonings or bindings, or foul to them, if used for banishing. The shaman's spirit stick, festooned with the claws and horns of beasts, is the best known of these, but flutes for air spirits, bowls for water spirits, or chimes for warding earth spirits are equally valid. Even hermetic magicians are prone to create themed foci, on the premise of sympathetic magic and the idea that like-follows-like. As with the above PACKs, there is an advanced version for those needing more oomph.

BASIC SPIRIT STICK PACK

ITEMS

Spirit focus: Summoning beast spirits (2)

ADVANCED SPIRIT STICK PACK

(15,000¥/8 KARMA) (+8 KARMA) (12R)

ADVANCED SPIRIT STICK PACK

ITEMS

Spirit focus: Summoning beast spirits (4)

MAGIC SPEAR PACK

(14,000¥/7 KARMA) (+6 KARMA) (8R)

Weapon foci have a long, proud tradition, but perhaps no weapon has truly walked beside man quite as long as the spear. A knife, chopping rock, or smashing club may be older, but those are tools with varied uses. The spear is designed to slay man's foes, a singular tool for a singular job. In this way, it remains the most natural of all weapon foci.

MAGIC SPEAR PACK

ITEMS

Weapon focus (2)

BUYING THE BASICS

In the course of any Shadowrun campaign, you're going to have people who want to buy some random thing or another that you can't find in the books. Most of these are small items that don't really need rules, since their use is fairly obvious, and if needed the gamemaster can adjudicate how they are used on the spot. Of a more vital note to most is just how much to charge for this kind of thing, from a swirl straw to a screwdriver to tickets for a Seahawks game. Today's technology gives you access to many a search engine to find real world examples, but how do you price them?

Easily.

Just remember the basic rule of thumb:

1¥ = 1 hamburger

This used to be the "Big Mac PPP" indicator from many an economics textbook, but Big Macs have gotten more expensive (a *Shadowrun* equivalent would cost 5 nuyen for instance!), while normal hamburgers and tacos have gotten close enough to parity to take over the role. This allows you to quickly grab prices on the fly and will allow you to adjust prices somewhat for your local currency exchange rates, inflation, and so on.

From here, two other factors should be taken into account. First is that peak oil has come and gone, leaving the world short on oil but using alternatives for energy (such as fusion) and products. This is coupled with ongoing food shortages, resulting in alternative foods such as krill, soy, and fungal micro-protein, each shaped, colored, and flavored to appear like other foodstuffs. "Real" food is quite expensive, found in the middle class and higher, while the poor have to subsist on artificial fare. Oil and food should thus be more expensive than in the real world.

To help get you started, here's a small list of items that you might find useful, already weighted (where needed) with Sixth World economics in mind. Unless otherwise noted, the availability for each is (—).

BUYING STUFF: FOOD

PRICE	ITEM
5¥	Liter bottle of water
10¥	Liter carton of milk
20¥	Liter bottle of fruit juice
1¥	Soyburger (basic)
5¥	Soyburger (fancy)
5¥	Hamburger (real beef)
5¥	Bag of chips (large)
5¥	Footlong krill sandwich
5¥	Pot of soyghetti
10¥	Large soy pizza
50¥	Large pizza
5¥	Street vendor food (hot dog, burrito, bowl of ramen, etc.)
5¥	Apple or potato
20¥	Peach or orange
5¥	Soy chicken
20¥	Chicken
10¥	Myco-protein steak
50¥	Steak
5¥	Average meal for one (at home)
10¥	Average meal for one (out)
50¥	Good meal for one (out) (2)
500¥	Fancy meal for one (8)

BUYING STUFF: CLOTHES

PRICE	ITEM
2¥	One-use shoes/pants/shirt/skirt
10¥	Cheap shoes/pants/shirt/skirt
50¥	Good shoes/pants/shirt/skirt
200¥	Nice shoes/pants/shirt/skirt
200¥	Cheap dress/suit
1,000¥	Good dress/suit (4)
10,000¥	Nice dress/suit (8)
75¥	Tuxedo rental
20¥	Hat
5¥	Ski mask
50¥	Coveralls
2¥	Cheap socks/undergarments
10¥	Good socks/undergarments
50¥	Nice socks/undergarments
2¥	One-use gloves
10¥	Cheap gloves/watch/jewelry
50¥	Good gloves/watch/jewelry
200¥	Nice gloves/watch/jewelry
500¥	Decent diamond ring
5,000¥	Large diamond ring

BUYING STUFF: ENTERTAINMENT

PRICE	ITEM
10¥	Music album downloaded
20¥	Movie, first run
5¥	Movie, second-run
5¥	Movie, one-view download
50¥	Sim program
10¥	Sim program, one-view download
10¥	Portable music player
20¥	Prepaid commlink (cheap)
100¥	Prepaid commlink (good)
50¥	Video game (new)
20¥	Video game (used/old)
5¥	Magazine*
20¥	Book*
100¥	Textbook (undergrad)*
500¥	Textbook (graduate)*
100¥	Trideo set (small)
500¥	Trideo set (medium)
2,000¥	Trideo set (large)
10¥	Ticket for a show (school)
50¥	Ticket for a show (normal) (4)
500¥	Ticket for a show (famous artist) (8)
50¥	Ticket for sporting event (nosebleed)
250¥	Ticket for sporting event (normal) (4)
1,000¥	Ticket for a sporting event (good) (8)
20,000¥	Box rental for ten at a sporting event (12)

** Download or printout (throwback)*

BUYING STUFF: HOUSEWARES

PRICE	ITEM
5¥	Kitchen timer
10¥	Towel
5¥	Pillowcase
10¥	Sheet
50¥	Sheet set
10¥	Table lamp
50¥	Floor lamp
10¥	Electric fan (cheap)
50¥	Electric fan (good)
500¥	Air conditioner (one room)
10¥	Mat
100¥	Rug

BUYING STUFF: TOOLS

PRICE	ITEM
10¥/meter	Universal connector cord
10¥/liter	House paint
10¥/liter	Gasoline
25¥/meter	Folding ladder
5¥	Can of spray paint
5¥	Calculator
5¥	Ruler (good)
5¥	Scissors (good)
5¥	Roll of duct tape
5¥	Light bulb (LED)
5¥	Tube of epoxy
10¥	Lighter (good)
10¥	Collapsible shovel
5¥	Hand tool (cheap)
20¥	Hand tool (good)
20¥	Power tool (cheap)
100¥	Power tool (good)
10¥	Paint roller
100¥	Paint gun
50¥/square meter	Solar panel
5¥	Fanny pack
20¥	Tool belt (cheap)
100¥	Tool belt (good)
20¥	Luggage (cheap)*
100¥	Luggage (good)*
500¥	Luggage (nice)*

** Luggage includes duffel bags, backpacks, briefcases, and suitcases.*

BUYING STUFF: SERVICES

PRICE	ITEM
50¥/visit	Medical (cheap)
500¥/visit	Medical (emergency)
20¥	Bribe (cheap)
100¥	Bribe (good)
2,000¥	Bribe (lavish)
20¥	Prostitution (cheap) (2)
100¥	Prostitution (good) (4)
500¥	Escort service (nice) (8)
8¥/hour	Unskilled labor
20¥/hour	Skilled labor (4)
50¥/hour	Highly skilled labor (8)

BUYING STUFF: MISC.

PRICE	ITEM
5¥	Pack of cigarettes
10¥	Cigar (decent)
100¥	Cigar (high quality)
5¥	Plush toy
100¥	Animatronic plush toy
10¥	Action figure
200¥	Animatronic action figure
5¥	Wrapping paper (roll)
5¥	Bag of ten pet treats
2¥/kg	Pet food
50¥	Vehicle tire (cheap)
200¥	Vehicle tire (decent)
1,000¥	Vehicle tire (high quality)
20¥	Fishing pole (cheap)
100¥	Fishing pole (good)
500¥	Fishing pole (deluxe)
5¥	Fishing lure
5¥	Baseball
20¥	Sport ball (cheap)
100¥	Sport ball (good)
20¥	Skates/skateboard (cheap)
100¥	Skates/skateboard (good)
100¥	Bicycle (cheap)
500¥	Bicycle (good)
10¥	One-liter canteen
100¥	Digital clipboard
20¥	Baby stroller
50¥	Bullhorn
20¥	Ink pen (good)
100¥	Ink pen (nice)
20¥	Music instrument (cheap)
100¥	Music instrument (good)
500¥	Music instrument (nice)
5¥/week	Cold medicine (cheap)
50¥/week	Cold medicine (good)

I'D BUY THAT FOR A NUYEN!

EACH OF THE FOLLOWING COSTS A SINGLE NUYEN. ENJOY!

ITEM
Song download
Screamsheet download
Soy burger
Soy taco
Soy hot dog
Four packs of instant ramen
Roll of clear tape
Roll of masking tape
Book of ten matches
Four disposable lighters
Cigar (cheap)
Ten pieces of chewing gum
One piece of betel nut gum
Disposable gloves
Ruler (cheap)
Paintbrush
Golf ball
Tongs
Thin washcloth
College bluebook
Two pocket notebooks
One hundred index cards
One hundred sticky notes
Twenty crayons
Two pencils
Ink pen (cheap)
Ten paper plates
Ten paper cups
Plastic plate
Plastic cup
Ten sandwich bags
Fifty disposable hand wipes
Two diapers
One serving of baby food

FIN